Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

BERLIN & THE WALL

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SIR WILLIAM HAYTER, JOHN MANDER, F. R. ALLEMANN

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ROBERT LOWELL
POEMS FROM RIMBAUD

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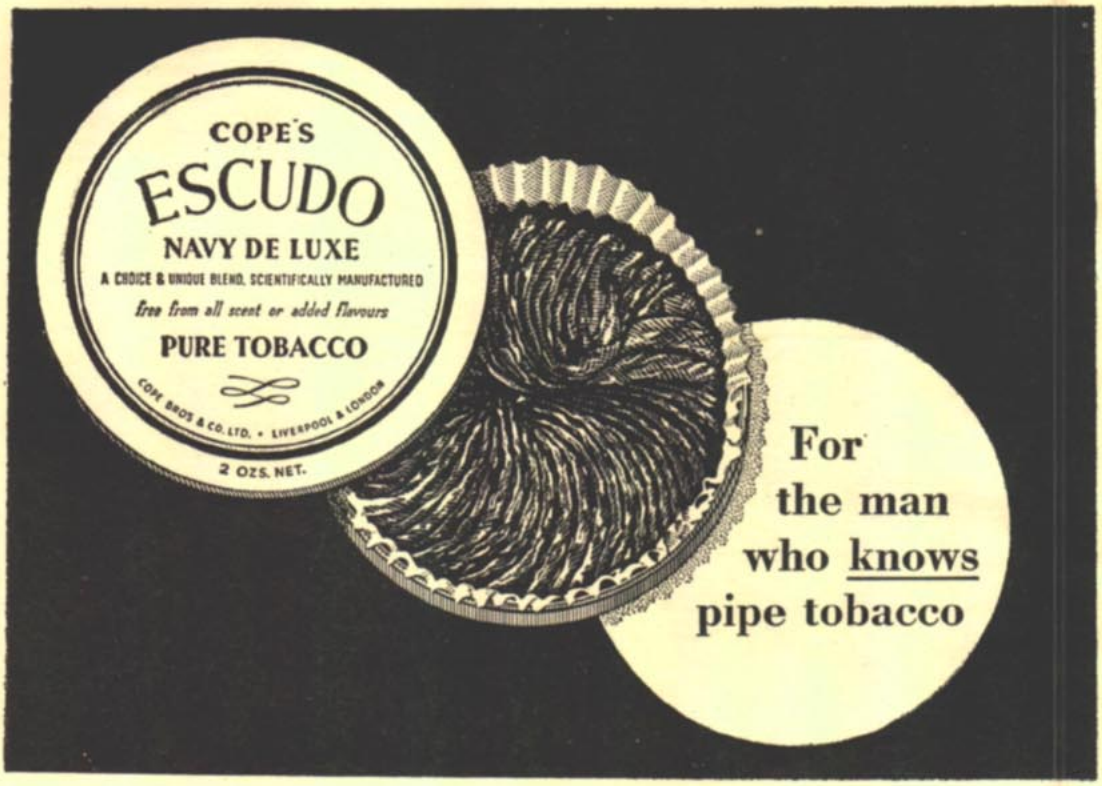

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W. H. Auden

Dag Hammarskjöld

ONE DOES NOT always have to see very much of another human being to feel certain of mutual affection and understanding. I don't suppose I met Dag Hammarskjöld more than a dozen times and, though we came to be on first-name terms, we never had a particularly intimate or memorable conversation; yet his death is for me a personal loss and not a superficial one. Of course, it is flattering to a poet when somebody in an exalted public position shows a genuine interest in contemporary poetry, including his own and, what is more, a real understanding. An intellectual is, naturally, surprised and impressed when a person concerned with the fate of nations can be bothered with the fate of individuals and spend time and energy trying to get Ezra Pound released from confinement. The memory of one telephone conversation still makes me blush. Hammarskjöld had asked me to make an English translation of St.-John Perse's acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, a job which had to be done in two days. "I don't see how I can manage it," I said, "I'm frightfully busy." To which he replied, without a hint of sarcasm in his voice, "I've done the Swedish translation and I'm rather busy too, you know."

But a common interest in literature, though it was the cause of our meeting, does not account for my feelings about the man. I have heard it said and seen it written that he was a cold fish to whom life was a matter of intellect and will, not heart; it has even been said that he lacked any firm beliefs or principles and was only interested in virtuoso feats of diplomatic technique. To such criticisms I can only say that my instinct tells me they are utterly wrong. If I am not mistaken, Hammarskjöld was by nature a warm-hearted introvert with a great capacity for intimacy who, if the traditions of his family and his own conscience had not called him to a life of public service, could very happily have led a Horatian kind of private existence, delighting in books, mountain-climbing, the company of a few old friends, and letting the world go its boring way. There are many prominent persons, in politics, journalism, industry, whom one cannot imagine in any milieu except public life—without a public audience and the exercise of public power, they would not know what to do with themselves. (This is not, of course, a moral criticism; some of them are noble characters.) But Hammarskjöld was not, I think, one of them. I don't mean that his choice of a public career was an act of spiritual masochism or that the only satisfaction it gave him was the consciousness of having wearily done his duty; on the contrary, I'm sure he enjoyed being Secretary-General very much. Meeting him shortly after Khrushchev's visit to New York, I remarked that I had been following his recent career with great sympathy. "Oh," he said, "you needn't be sorry for me at all. I had a wonderful time." But in his case public life demanded, as for more extrovert natures it might not, considerable sacrifices.

AT THIS POINT in history, there can be no more solitary position in the world than that of Secretary-General to the United Nations, unless it be that of the Pope. A

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national politician can have personal friends among his colleagues for he is a confessed representative of party and national interests. A judge can make friends with other judges because he knows they are never likely to appear in court before him. But the head of an international organisation at a time when national passions are as violent and paranoid as they are to-day, dares not show a personal preference for one member of the Assembly, for he will be immediately accused of political bias. Nor can he make close friends with persons outside political life; he has no time to see them. Moreover, the many political enemies he is bound to make will keep close watch on his private life in the hope of finding some weakness or irregularity they can use as a weapon against him. Hammarskjöld accepted personal isolation as a necessary condition of his post, but he needed will-power to maintain it. Though he would never have complained to others—he was completely free from self-pity—he was, I believe, a lonely man, not a self-sufficient one.

While far too proud to talk in resounding phrases about Ideals, and far too intelligent to have any rosy illusions about human nature, diplomacy was for him a technical means, not an end in itself, and, in the various political decisions he had to take, he never, I am convinced, sacrificed principle to expediency. Would he have incurred such a variety of abuse, ranging from Comrade Khrushchev's girlish tantrums to Sir Roy Welensky's manly bellows if he had?

I KNOW NOTHING about Katanga beyond what I read in the British and American press which I suspect of soft-pedalling certain aspects of the situation, such as the constitution of the Katanga army. I am neither a politician nor an historian and, for all I know, Hammarskjöld's decision to intervene was a grave mistake. But when I read a newspaper article in which it is asserted that Hammarskjöld was behaving according to that old crook's maxim, "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs," that, in order to gain the support of the African *bloc*, he cold-bloodedly sacrificed Katanga, I feel like knocking the author down. The man I knew was a diplomat, certainly, but not a smart operator. If he decided to intervene, it was because, rightly or wrongly, he believed intervention to be just. He was one of the two most selfless people I have met in my life, and to have known him, even as slightly as I did, was a privilege.

After Holderlin

I say of any man, when he is good
And wise, what does he need? Will some things
Feed his soul? Is there an ear of corn,
A secret vineyard ripening in the earth

To nourish him? Here is the truth of that—
A friend may be the loved one, art is
Much. Dear friend, here is the truth of you—
Daedalus' ghost is yours, the summer woods'.

Reynolds Price

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Robert Lowell

Poems by Rimbaud

NOSTALGIA

(An autobiographical poem: Rimbaud remembers the small boy in a rowboat under the old walls of Charleville. His mother and sisters are on the bank. His father has just deserted them.)

1

The sucking river was the child's salt tears.
His eyes were blinded by white walls; the girls,
white lilies on white silk! The *Tricouleur*
hung from the walls restored by Joan of Arc—

wings of an angel! No, the gold stream slid,
breathing the underwater amber of its reeds . . .
His mother had the blue sky for parasol,
yet begged the arched bridge and the hills for shade.

2

Then the walled surface swam with bubbles;
cloth of gold coverings piled the riverbed;
the sisters' faded grass-bruised pinafores
hung like willows; birds stepped from twig to twig.

Through noon, the river's spotted mirror steamed
off to the bare sky's perfect, burning sphere—
Oh Bride, your faith was purer than gold coins,
marsh marigolds, my hot and burning eyelid . . .

3

The mother stood too stiffly in the field,
beclouded with the field-hands' shirts. She twirled
her parasol, and trampled on the weeds.
The sisters sat on the heraldic green,

and stared at red Morocco Missals, while
his father walked beyond the mountain, like
a thousand angels parting on the road.
She, cold and black, flew. Rushed after her lost man!

4

Nostalgia for his hairy arms—the grass
green in the holy April moonlight! Joy!
The riverbank's abandoned lumberyards
still fertilised the marsh with blocks and sawdust.

She wept below the parapet. The breath
of the dry poplars was the wind's alone;
the water had no bottom and no source;
a man in mud-caked hip-boots poled a barge.

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5

The dull eye drove the water out of reach—
still boat, oh too short arms! I could not touch
one or the other flower—the yellow burned me,
the cool blue was the ash-grey water's friend.

The reeds had eaten up the roses long ago;
each wing-beat shook the willows' silver dust.
My boat stuck fast; its anchor dug for bottom;
the lidless eye, still water, filled with mud.

Mémoire

THE POET AT SEVEN

When the timeless, daily, tedious affair
was over, his Mother shut
her Bible; her nose was in the air;
from her summit
of righteousness, she could not see the boy:
his lumpy forehead knotted
with turmoil, his soul returned to its vomit.

All day he would sweat obedience.
He was very intelligent, but wrung,
and every now and then a sudden jerk
showed dark hypocrisies at work.
He would clap his hands on his rump,
and strut where the gloom of the hallway rotted
the hot curtains. He stuck out his tongue,
clenched his eyes shut, and saw dots.
A terrace gave on the twilight;
one used to see him up there in the lamplight,
sulking on the railing
under an abyss of air
which hung from the roof. The worst block
was the stultifying slump
of mid-summer—he would lock
himself up in the toilet and inhale
its freshness; there he could breathe.

When winter snowed under the breath of flowers,
and the moon blanched the little bower
behind the house, he would crawl
to the foot of the wall
and lie with his eyeballs squeezed to his arm,
dreaming of some dark revelation,
or listening to the legions of termites swarm
in the horny espaliers. As for compassion,
the only children he would speak to
were creepy, abstracted boys, who hid
match-stick thin fingers yellow and black with mud
under rags stuck with diarrhoea.
Their dull eyes drolled on their dull cheeks,
they spoke with the selfishness of morons.
His Mother was terrified,
she thought they were losing caste. This was good—
she had the true blue look that lied.

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At seven he was making novels
about life in the Sahara,
where ravished Liberty had fled—
sunrises, buffaloes, jungle, savannahs!
For his facts, he used illustrated weeklies,
and blushed at the rotogravures of naked, red
Hawaiian girls dancing.
A little eight year old tomboy,
the daughter of the next door workers,
came, brown-eyed, terrible,
in a print dress. Brutal and in the know,
she would jump on his back,
and ride him like a buffalo,
and shake out her hair.
Wallowing below
her once, he bit her crotch—
she never wore bloomers—
kicked and scratched, he carried back
the taste of her buttocks to his bedroom.

What he feared most
were the sticky, lost December Sundays,
when he used to stand with his hair gummed back
at a little mahogany stand, and hold
a Bible pocked with cabbage-green mould.
Each night in his alcove, he had dreams.
He despised God, the National Guard,
and the triple drum-beat
of the town-crier calling up the conscripts.
He loved the swearing
workers, when they crowded back, black
in the theatrical twilight to their wards.
He felt clean
when he filled his lungs with the smell—
half hay fever, half iodine—
of the wheat,
he watched its pubic golden tassels swell
and steam in the heat,
then sink back calm.

What he liked best were dark things:
the acrid, dank rings
on the ceiling, and the high,
bluish plaster, as bald as the sky
in his bare bedroom, where he could close
the shutters and lose
his world for hundreds of hours,
mooning doggedly
over his novel, endlessly
expanding with jaundiced skies,
drowned vegetation, and carnations
that flashed like raw flesh
in the underwater green
of the jungle starred with flowers—
dizziness, mania, revulsions, pity!

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Often the town playground
below him grew loud with children;
the wind brought him their voices,
and he lay alone on pieces of unbleached canvas,
violently breaking into sail.

Les poëtes de sept ans

THE DRUNKEN BOAT

I felt my guides no longer carried me—
as we sailed down the virgin Amazon,
the redskins nailed them to their painted stakes
naked, as targets for their archery.

I carried Flemish wheat or Swedish wood,
but had forgotten my unruly crew:
their conversation ended with their lives,
the river let me wander where I would.

Surf punished me, and threw my cargo out;
last winter I was breaking up on land.
I fled. These floating river villages
had never heard a more triumphant shout.

The green ooze spurting through my centreboard
was sweeter than sour apples to a boy—
it washed away the stains of puke and rot-gut,
anchor and wheel were carried overboard.

The typhoon spun my silly needle round;
ten nights I scudded from the freighters' lights;
lighter than cork I danced upon the surge
man calls the rolling coffin of his drowned.

Rudderless, I was driven like a plank
on night seas stuck with stars and dribbling milk;
I shot through greens and blues, where luminous,
swollen, drowned sailors rose for light and sank.

I saw the lightning turn the pole-star green,
currents, icebergs, and waterspouts. One night
the sunrise lifted like a flock of doves—
I saw whatever men suppose they've seen.

I saw the ocean bellowing on the land,
cattle stampeding with their tails on fire,
but never dreamed Three Marys walked the sea
to curb those frothing muzzles with a hand.

I saw the salt marsh boil, a whole whale rot
in some Louisiana bayou's muck,
cutting the blue horizon with its flukes—
bon-bons of sunlight and cold azure snot!

I was a lost boat nosing through the hulls
of Monitors and Hanseatic hulks;
none cared to gaff my wreckage from the bilge
and yellow beaks of the marauding gulls.

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I would have liked to show a child those seas,
rocking to soothe the clatter of my sails
in irons on the equatorial line.
Like a woman, I fell upon my knees,

then heaven opened for the voyager.
I stared at archipelagos of stars.
Was it on those dead watches that I died—
a million golden birds, Oh future Vigour!

I cannot watch these purple suns go down
like actors on the Aeschylean stage.
I'm drunk on water. I cry out too much—
Oh that my keel might break, and I might drown!

Shrunken and black against a twilight sky,
our Europe has no water. Only a pond
the cows have left, and a boy wades to launch
his paper boat frail as a butterfly.

Bathed in your languors, Waves, I have no wings
to cut across the wakes of cotton ships,
or fly against the flags of merchant kings,
or swim beneath the guns of prison ships.

Le bateau ivre

EIGHTEEN-SEVENTY

1

A POSTER OF OUR DAZZLING VICTORY AT SAARBRÜCKEN

In the center of the poster, Napoleon
rides in apotheosis, sallow, medalled, a ramrod
perched on a merrygoround horse. He sees life
through rosy glasses, terrible as God,

and sentimental as a bourgeois papa.
Four little conscripts take their nap below
him—scarlet guns and drums. One, unbuckling, cheers
Napoleon—he's stunned by the big name!

Another lounges on the butt of his Chassepot,
he feels his thrilled hair shiver up his neck,
a bearskin shako bounds like a black sun:

VIVE L'EMPEREUR! They're holding back their breath.
And last, some moron, struggling to his knees,
presents a blue and scarlet ass—to what?

2

NAPOLEON AFTER SEDAN

The man waxy—he jogs along the fields
in flower, black, a cigar between his teeth.
The wax man thinks about the Tuileries
in flower. At times his mossy eye takes fire.

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Twenty years of orgy have made him drunk:
he'd said: "My hand will snuff out Liberty,
politely, gently, as I snuff my stogie!"
Liberty lives; the Emperor is out—

he's captured. Oh what name is shaking on
his lips? What plebiscites? Napoleon
cannot tell you. His shark's eye is dead.

An opera glass on the horses at Compère . . .
he watches his cigar fume off in smoke . . .
soireés at Saint Cloud . . . a bluish vapour.

3

TO THE FRENCH OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

You, dead in '92 and '93,
still pale from the great kiss of Liberty—
when tyrants trampled on humanity,
you broke them underneath your wooden shoes.

You were reborn and great by agony,
your hearts in rags still beat for our salvation—
Oh soldiers, sown by death, your noble lover,
in our old furrows you regenerate!

You, whose life-blood washed our soiled standards red,
the dead of Valmy, Italy, Fleurus,
thousands of Christs, red-bonneted . . . we

have let you die with our Republic, we
have licked the boots of our bored kings like dogs—
men of the Second Empire, I mean you!

4

ON THE ROAD

I walked on the great road, my two fists lost
in my slashed pockets, and my overcoat
the ghost of a coat. Under the sky, I walked,
I was your student, Muses. What affairs

we had together! My only pants were a big hole.
Tom Thumb, the dreamer, I was knocking off
my coupled rhymes. My inn was the Great Bear;
the stars rang like silver coins in my hand.

I heard them and I squatted on my hams,
September twilight on September twilight,
rhyming into the fairy-crowded dark.

The rain's cheap wine was splashing on my face.
I plucked at the elastics on my clobbered
shoes—one foot pressed tight against my heart.

5

AT THE GREEN CABARET

For eight days I had been knocking my boots
on the road stones. I was entering Charleroi,
At the Green Cabaret, I called for ham,
half cold, and a large helping of jam tarts

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Happy, I kicked my shoes off, cooled my feet
under the table, green like the room, and laughed
at the naïve Belgian pictures on the wall.
But it was terrific when the house-girl

with her earth-mother tits and come-on eyes—
no Snow-Queen having cat-fits at a kiss—
brought me tarts and ham in a coloured plate.

She stuck a clove of garlic in the ham,
red frothed by white, and slopped beer in my stein—
foam gilded by a ray of the late sun.

6

A MALICIOUS GIRL

In the cigar-brown dining room, perfumed
by a smell of shellac and cabbage soup,
I held my plate and raked together some
God-awful Belgian dish. I blew my soup,

and listened to the clock tick while I ate,
and then the kitchen opened with a blast;
a housemaid entered, God knows why—her blouse
half open, yellow hair in strings. She touched

a little finger trembling to her cheek,
where the peach-velvet changed from white to red,
and made a schoolgirl grimace with her lips . . .

She swept away the plates to clear my mind,
then—just like that—quite sure of being kissed,
she whispered, "Look, my cheek has caught a cold."

7

THE SLEEPER IN THE VALLEY

The swollen river sang through the green hole,
and madly hooked white tatters on the grass.
Light escaladed the hot hills. The whole
valley bubbled with sunbeams like a beer-glass.

The conscript was open-mouthed; his bare head
and neck swam in the bluish water cress.
He slept. The mid-day soothed his heaviness,
sunlight was raining into his green bed,

and baked the bruises from his body, rolled
as a sick child might hug itself asleep . . .
Oh Nature, rock him warmly, he is cold.

The flowers no longer make his red eyes weep.
The river sucks his hair. A blue eye rolls.
He sleeps. In his right side are two red holes.

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8

EVIL

All day the red spit of the chain-shot tore
whistling across the infinite blue sky,
while the great captain saw his infantry
flounder in massed battalions into fire.

The criminal injustice that deceives
and rules us, lays our corpses end on end,
then burns us like the summer grass or leaves;
La Patrie is avaricious to this end!

She is a god that laughs at Papal bulls,
the great gold chalice and the thuribles.
She dozes while our grand hosannas drown

the guns and bands, and wakes to hear the grief
of widows or a mother who lays down
her great sou knotted in a handkerchief.

L'Eclatante Victoire de Sarrebrück, Rages de Césars, Français de soixante-dix, Ma Bohème, La Maline, Le Dormeur du Val, Le Mal

THE LICE-HUNTERS

The child, feverish, frowning, only saw red
finally, and begged the fairies for his life;
the royal sisters sat beside his bed;
each long and silver finger was a knife.

They laid the child beside the window's arch,
half-open. A glass of violets drank the blue;
he felt their wicked razor fingers march
through his thick hair to comb away the dew.

He heard their singing breath, and tried to breathe
the scent of rose and almond honey, hissed
and whistled through the fissures of their teeth,
sucking saliva from the lips he kissed.

He heard their eyebrows beating in the dark
whenever an electric finger struck to crush
a bloated louse, and blood would pop and mark
the indolence of their disdainful touch.

Wine of idleness had flushed his eyes;
somewhere a child's harmonica pushed its sigh
insanely through the wearied lungs—the rise
and dying of his ceaseless wish to cry.

Les chercheuses de poux

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Robert Kee

The Wall

LARGE AMERICAN RANGERS with carbines and steel helmets were looking quite sharply eastwards from the sockets of the first floor windows of a bombed-out building in the Friedrichstrasse. One of them had found himself a chair and sat there in the precarious shell in all the easy incongruity of war. It might indeed have been a lull in heavy street-fighting. Except that when the building in which he sat had been shattered the American Ranger had been about six years old, and that down in the street just this side of two white-painted lines where Ulbricht's wall allowed a gap for traffic, an American television unit was at work getting a jeep mounted with an outsize bazooka to manœuvre this way and that. ("Just a little more to the left, please, Captain—O.K. for you now, Eddie?") Almost no one noticed the strained, middle-aged German woman in a green raincoat and flat rubber-soled shoes hurrying along the street as if on her way round the corner to the shops. But she was not on her way to the shops.

Just round the corner, Ulbricht's stunted wall, topped with a few strands of barbed wire that looked as if they had started rusty, ran in the gutter parallel with the pavement. This pavement now had the wistful melancholy of a path beside a disused canal. On it, close to the corner, stood a kiosk of the sort which carries announcements of Berlin theatre programmes. Here the woman stopped and began waving over the top of the wall and across a bomb site to the back of a block of houses about two hundred yards away. In her other hand she furtively clutched a handkerchief.

A window on the first floor of the block held geraniums in a window-box like little flags. Suddenly this window opened and for a few seconds a younger woman stood in the void waving back. Then the window shut again and the woman in the green raincoat hurried back round the corner. From the other side of the gap in the wall the East German People's Police were watching the television filming with polite interest through binoculars. They too, even if they saw her, took no interest in the woman in the green raincoat.

After a while she turned round and came back to the kiosk and again started waving. The window opened but this time there seemed no response at first. Then, sticking straight up in the air above the geraniums, out of the void there appeared a tiny arm. It stayed there for about half a minute until the window shut again abruptly and the woman in the green raincoat turned back for good, this time making no attempt to hide her handkerchief.

OVER THE YEARS we have been told so much about "Berlin, the Divided City," that it is difficult to realise that what happened on August 13th was, for Berliners, not just a consolidation in concrete and barbed wire of a *status quo* but something quite new. Before that, not only did some 50,000 East Berliners go to work in West Berlin every day and a smaller number of West Berliners work in East Berlin, not only did tarts cross the street to earn West German marks and East Berliners come to the shops, cinemas, and cafés of West Berlin, not only did some 8,000 West Berliners have gardens

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and allotments in East Berlin which they tended as only Germans can, but thousands and thousands of families and friends maintained daily or weekly contact across the invisible border. It was crossed one way or another some half a million times a day. To become a refugee from East Germany before August 13th all you had to do was to take advantage of this situation. Now it has *all* stopped.

The political consequences for East Germany —previously the only Communist economy with an open end—will be immense. From now on there will be nothing for East Germans to prefer, and behind the wall new "norms" and new hardships can be imposed because there is no longer an alternative with which these have to compete. The political consequences for the world may or may not be as catastrophic as most West Berliners insist who see the West's acceptance of the wall as further proof of its acceptance of its own destruction by Communists' "salami-slicing" tactics. But on a local human level (the one really irrelevant consideration probably in a world beset by thermo-nuclear risks) the consequences for Berliners of Ulbricht's wall have been tragic.

FOR THE OUTSIDER, this wall sometimes seems just comic. In the Bernauerstrasse a block of three or four houses themselves form the frontier. The interior of the houses is in the Eastern sector, the pavement outside in the West. On the ground floor you can peer in and see the wall continuing through the inside of the house behind the windows, while upstairs three grey-haired old ladies stare down at "the free world" graciously indicating that they would prefer not to be photographed. In the doorway of a shop on the opposite side of the road an old bald tobacconist with a white moustache like the Kaiser's takes the air and tells you how fourteen people slid down on to the pavement opposite from a rope one afternoon last week. On another afternoon a woman came down out of an upper window without a rope and killed herself. You feel that if someone were to come flying out of one of those windows now he would pay about as much attention as he would to a shooting star.

At the end of this block of houses Ulbricht's wall juts out from Communist territory and in fact commands the pavement. The heads of two People's Policemen stick up ludicrously and rather sheepishly over the top, one of them with a cigarette in his mouth and his cap on one side of his head—their job presumably to see that no one does come flying out of these windows. But this has been made difficult for them by a huge board which West Berliners have erected, screening their line of vision down the pavement. And in the centre of this board is a notice: WANTED FOR MURDER, showing a photograph of a People's Policeman who killed an East Berliner trying to swim the Teltow canal, and signed by the Chief of Police of West Berlin. Thwarted by this the People's Police have taken extra precautions at the other end of the block of houses. Here the high wall of a churchyard naturally continues the line of the frontier, thus saving Ulbricht building materials except for a quantity of broken glass sprinkled along the top. And here now, poking most of his body over the wall from the top of a ladder, appears another *Vopo*,* like a sort of Humpty Dumpty.

Looking at these *Vopos* sticking their heads and shoulders over the tops of walls one gets a curious impression that they have individually walled themselves in—like some hypermanic crew of paranoiacs. The impression is heightened by their occasional quite friendly grins. (How barking mad in fact a human being would have to be to do this to himself. And yet it would undoubtedly make a madman feel better in the sense of enabling him to get along better with himself.)

Somebody takes a photograph of the two *Vopos* at the point where the wall juts out, and calls over to them: "If you like to come over to this side you can see that one developed!" The one with his cap on one side laughs at first, but the other turns his back with an expression of outrage as if a pass had just been made at him, and his companion feels obliged to do the same.

THE GRIM SIDE of the wall can be reached easily enough on the *S-Bahn*, the overhead railway which still runs freely from any station in West Berlin straight through to the Friedrichstrasse station in the East. Not until you have gone down the steps to the exit and reached the ticket barrier is there any obvious sign that you have crossed from one world to another. Several separate groups of blue-uniformed railway police examine your passport, staring at expired visas for the Sudan and Brazil, reluctant like most policemen and immigration officials to concede

* Popular abbreviation for *Volkspolizist*—People's Policeman.

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that they can make a move that is not significant. The scrupulous politeness with which they return your passport is of the same order.

Outside the station is a plaque commemorating the fact that on this spot in April, 1945, "TWO YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIERS WERE HANGED BY DEHUMANISED (*entmenschten*) S.S." Perhaps it would be better if there were more notices like this all over Germany, but it has a strange effect here where the streets filled with green uniforms and jackboots have an atmosphere eerily reminiscent of wartime Germany twenty years ago.

You can take a taxi to as close to the wall as the People's Police will allow anyone to get.

"It's something we're no longer very much interested in over here," said the driver, as if somehow it had been the West which put it up. "We take it for granted—but I'll take you wherever you like, of course."

Most of the old slogans and posters were still about: "DOWN WITH MILITARISM!", "LONG LIVE GERMAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP," "THE WAY TO THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY LIES THROUGH THE S.E.D. (Communist Unity Party)"—how to square this, exactly, with Khrushchev's supposed wish for a divided Germany? At least one new slogan: "GAGARIN—YOU ARE PART OF ALL THIS TOO!" and at least one old poster that should have been removed: some idealistic-looking children in a classroom learning to spell—"B BOMBEN, N NEIN, L LEBEN, LERNEN, LACHEN." In the betting shops you can bet freely on the races at Vincennes, and the tiles are apparently falling faster than ever from the front of the five-year-old buildings in the Stalin-allee. Of the waste acres round the Alexanderplatz the driver said: "Now we are going to rebuild all this again. . . ."

"But why only now after fifteen years?"

"You must understand that until August 13th so many of our best workers were being drained off to West Berlin and West Germany."

He said this dutifully as if he were not very proud of it as an answer. A closer look at his face revealed a man of about forty-five, very pale and unhappy-looking but purposeful. A decent man trying to rationalise for himself the society in which he had to live and finding it uphill work. In the end, without being specially asked, he drove to the houses on the eastern side of the Bernauerstrasse ("I thought you would want to see this") and waited in a side street.

THE THREE OLD LADIES may still have been looking out of the back and the tobacconist still taking the air. Here in front there stood an armed policeman at every doorway. A little further along, a street set back a block of houses from the wall runs parallel with it for some distance. At intersection after intersection of this street you can see how the streets running at right angles to it have all been turned into little *culs-de-sac* by the wall. And here, at the end of each *cul-de-sac*, though kept at a distance from the wall itself by police, little groups of the ordinary people of Berlin had now gathered to wave to indeterminate similar groups on the western side. Two young girls in yellow leather jackets and tight jeans, looking through binoculars; an old working couple, the man in a blue peaked cap taking off his spectacles and looking over the top now and again as if that might help him to recognise whoever he was looking for, the woman in a long red and white flowered dress, who spent more time talking to bystanders in her agitation than making any real attempt to look. Dozens and dozens of such people waving and waving as if the movement were somehow as necessary to the maintenance of life itself as the movement of their lungs. There was a tentativeness about them all as they edged a little closer to the wall with each wave—as if arms rather than legs were carrying them forward—and then stopped and retreated a pace or two, unsure how much they could get away with. There was a tentativeness, too, about the behaviour of the People's Police, as if they themselves were not quite sure how much they could get away with letting the others get away with.

On the whole, however, the wavers were kept at such a distance that, without binoculars, it must have been almost impossible to distinguish anyone. One working woman was looking down the dead-end street as if she somehow expected the person she was looking for to come down it towards her at any moment. Three weeks before, her seventeen-year-old son had disappeared. Every evening now for three weeks she had come here, the nearest part of the wall to where she lived, hoping somehow to see him on the other side. But by now, of course, she must have realised that even if he had been there she couldn't possibly have made him out at that distance.

AS WE DROVE AWAY the taxi-driver suddenly spoke of his own accord. "We Germans must never forget," he said, and the paleness and the desperation in his face combined into a single expression, "We must never be allowed to forget

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the terrible things we did to millions and millions of people all over Europe. We Germans have no right to complain of such things as you have just seen. We have brought it on ourselves. What right have we to complain of our families being separated when we tore millions and millions of Jewish families apart and killed them? At least here there has been no killing."

This time there was a real conviction in his voice. This was the most plausible way he had found of coming to terms with his society. But it was a masochistic sort of solution and, understandably, still didn't seem to leave him very happy. How much longer would he be able to go on believing that there was an important difference in human terms between Nazis and Communists? It is possibly true that the East German Communists have intentionally killed few of their opponents, but when their newspapers now report with glee that workers are "educating with their fists" recalcitrant colleagues who criticise the wall, how much longer can one expect the fine distinction to continue—let alone satisfy a decent man like this driver?

On the Invalidenstrasse, close to the Nord-Bahnhof, other similar groups of waving East Berliners had collected but were being kept at an even greater distance from the wall. Superficially this seemed a more bourgeois crowd than the previous one: women in high heels; a greying, middle-aged man in a very well-cut tweed jacket and grey flannel trousers, with binoculars; a mother with an expensive-looking pram being urged to hold up her baby but more upset than the others and thus minding more about the pointlessness of just doing such a thing for the hell of it. The others were enjoying themselves, waving scarves and coats and handbags. Someone lit a piece of paper and threw it into the air. Probably only by coincidence a torch started flashing irregularly in the dusk far away in the western sector, but it raised morale on the pavement considerably.

One of the old-fashioned-looking small charabancs in which the *Volkspolizei*, seated in rows, move about the sector had been drawn up for some time at a road junction about a hundred yards away. Now it began to disgorge its load and the youthful green-uniformed police quite firmly but without violence started driving people from the pavement. Everyone crossed the road to the pavement on the other side. Most of the *Vopos* seemed content with this as if they had only been ordered to clear the opposite pavement. But quite suddenly a tubby blond *Oberleutnant* in his early twenties came strutting across the road towards us. He had drawn the black rubber truncheon at his hip.

Although unmistakably German he seemed anxious to show his pride in the Russian training he had presumably received: *"Davai! Davai!"* he yelled, waving his rubber truncheon.

The crowd on the pavement faced his onslaught calmly, moving a few steps at a time in each direction and thus confusing him slightly about which way he in fact wanted to drive them. "Come on!" he shouted in German. "Everyone off the pavement! Everyone off the pavement!" But still people, though moving, were moving only first one way and then the other without leaving the pavement. It was a masterpiece of spontaneous passive resistance. He took the only step possible and picked on one man, a very tall, straight youth in jeans at whom he shouted: "I said, *Off the pavement!* Now at the double!" The youth turned his back on him and walked very slowly away. "I said *Double!*" screamed the *Oberleutnant*, *"Laufschritt!"* The youth moved only very, very slowly, placing his feet deliberately and ignoring the hysterical shouting behind him. The *Oberleutnant* raised his truncheon: *"Laufschritt! Eins . . . Zwei. . . ."* The youth still took no notice. *". . . Drei!"* He brought the truncheon down as hard as he could on the youth's left buttock and went on beating him until the youth, still magnificently paying no attention, had reached the corner in his own time. The *Oberleutnant*, his internal tensions temporarily exorcised, came straight over to me, saluted, and asked for my papers. Carefully he examined the expired Brazilian and Sudanese visas and with another polite salute handed my passport back.

There had been something sad about the obligatory masochism of the East Berlin taxi-driver's outburst, but at least it recognised that there was a "German problem," in the sense of a real legacy from the past, superimposed on the "Berlin problem" and the "international problem" of the cold war. What he had said was an improvement on the only two conversations bearing at all on the past which I had with West Berliners. One of these, talking of the killing of the refugee in the Teltow canal, had simply said: "What a tragedy! That Germans should be shooting at *Germans*!" The other, condemning the East German régime for the

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same incident, said: "Of course we had something like all that under Hitler—the dictatorship, the lack of freedom to say what you thought, the little tin gods (*Bonzen*) of the Party, but we never had murder. . . ." "Well," I said, "yes, you did have murder too." And he said as if this were somehow irrelevant: "Ah, yes, murder too, but that came later."

Intellectuals in West Berlin do not of course ignore the past like this, but it does sometimes seem that the way they acknowledge it is to transfer their loathing of what happened under Hitler to what is now happening under Communism and thus neatly expiate for themselves a racial guilt without actually having to feel guilty. Now this is in many ways an adult thing to do since any kind of racial guilt is an irrational concept. But pragmatically it is dangerous. For how can Germans understand the partly irrational feelings so many other people have about them to-day if they don't partly have these feelings themselves?

THE RECEPTION CAMP for refugees at Marienfelde in West Berlin is unlike a normal refugee camp of the 20th century in almost every way. It is not just that conditions are better and that refugees are better dressed and equipped. The most important difference is that there is a spring in their step as they move about the orderly, well-paved housing estate. These refugees are happy to be here and know that they are unlikely to stay here for more than six weeks or so (8–10 days is the official time). The picture you get here of what life is like on the other side of the wall is a depressing one by any standards but particularly so if reason tells you that world interests make some sort of "recognition" of the East German régime necessary.

To-day most of the inhabitants of Marienfelde are young men of between sixteen and twenty, an élite in many ways of East Berlin youth, who have crawled over or broken through the wall, or swum across lakes or canals or the river Spree at the risk of their lives since August 13th.* Young electricians, builders, lorry drivers, house painters, they all confirm the picture of everyday life given by older refugees who either arrived before August 13th or else were caught on a normal visit to West Berlin by the erection of the wall and decided to stay. Always the same story of dreary conditions daily becoming drearier, with fear in the background as an infinite extension of the dreariness. From these ordinary people one gets the impression of a régime which incidentally uses terror to assert itself but whose dominant characteristic is an utter failure to fulfil competently the simplest functions of government. "One quarter of a pound of butter for a family of four for a whole week—do you realise what that's like when you've got two small children?" . . . "Not even enough potatoes for the winter, not enough potatoes, I ask you, in our part of the world!" . . . "No oranges or bananas, or if there are, at 2 marks or 3 marks 50 [4 shillings; 7 shillings] a pound." . . . "Only one sort of beef in the shops one week and then the next week only fish." . . . "No rubber soles, then suddenly all rubber soles, but only size 42." . . .

All refugees exaggerate, but all refugees do not exaggerate all the time.

"They called him a capitalist," said the youngish wife of a small-time farmer, pointing at her husband who had been working on a collective farm and who now stood placidly against a wall smoking his pipe as if he were already a small farmer again. She was pregnant and two very small, dirty children clung to her long apron. "Do you realise we even had to walk a mile for drinking water? . . . And the *brigadier*—my God, that man was a swine. I'd rather live for twenty years in a refugee camp than go back there." They had arrived via the *S-Bahn* the day before the wall went up.

STANDING NOT FAR OFF was a man in his forties with a face that seemed very vaguely familiar. I asked him why he had come to the West. He thought for some time before replying.

"You may not believe me, but it was my conscience. I was a head waiter in D——. It was an important restaurant and I had a good job. But you must realise that with us it's like this— . . ." He broke off and smiled. "There you are, you see, I still say *'with us'*—I mean

* There are many good authenticated stories of escapes since this date. One of the best (vouched for on reputable authority, but not personally authenticated) is that of the East Berlin woman who got the guard at the Brandenburg gate to put down their arms while she distributed cigarettes, chocolate, and other "comforts" to "our brave boys." Then she seized the opportunity to dash through the barrier. A *Vopo* Sergeant gave chase, shouting to her to stop but making it impossible for his comrades to shoot. When they were both well over on the Western side he seized hold of her and thanked her heartily for thus making possible his own escape.

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over there. Over there the atmosphere is such that if you're in a position like that you have to tell people lies all the time. To get people to work for me properly—long hours for no more pay and that sort of thing—to run the place properly, I kept on having to tell them that it was for socialism, for the good of socialism, that we must all work harder for socialism and all that. Well, after a bit I just couldn't bear the fraud.... So now here I am with my family." He smiled with an expression of great relief as if he had only just that moment escaped. It was then that I realised who he had reminded me of: the taxi-driver in East Berlin who would have looked very like him if the expression of extreme unease could have been removed from his face.

Two young men, one blond, one red-haired, each with intelligent balanced faces, had just drawn their day's rations from the kitchen. I asked the red-haired one how he had come over.

"I'm a lorry driver. I drove my lorry right up close to the wall and jumped over."

"Was that easy?"

"Well, I felt frightened all right. When I jumped down the other side my heart was going...." He struck his heart several times rapidly with his hand to convey the sensation.

"But how did you manage to get so close to the wall with the lorry. Didn't the *Vopos* see you?"

"Yes, they saw me." He smiled. "You see I was bringing up concrete blocks for the wall."

I asked about the morale of the *Volkspolizei*. He pointed to his friend.

"Ask him. He was one."

THERE WERE MORE than a dozen *Vopos* in Marienfelde at the time. This man confirmed that morale was bad, but he said it hadn't been easy to decide to come over.

"Do the *Volkspolizei* get special privileges, special rations, or anything like that?"

"Nothing but sausage all the time."

"The *Betriebskampfgruppen* [Factory militia] are the nastiest," said the lorry driver. "They've got something to gain by keeping their morale up. They lead just the same lives and with the same pay as if they were in ordinary jobs but don't have to do a stroke of work except spy on the other workers and keep them in order."

"It's the corruption that's the worst thing," said an elderly wood-cutter. He was unshaven, with white stubble on his chin, and smoking a cigar and wearing gym shoes. He had come through the wire on his own on August 14th near the Potsdamer Platz. He had been worried when he suddenly saw three *Vopos* standing not far off, but they hadn't seemed to pay much attention to him and he had met all three of them again here in the camp. Why did he come? He was getting windy. He'd been so fed up at not being able to find the money with which to bribe the *Bürgermeister* to get a house that he had started saying publicly what everyone knew, namely that the *Bürgermeister* took bribes. The *Bürgermeister* had sent for him and said: "You haven't any proof and I'm going to run you in for sabotage." The woodcutter had realised what that meant and bolted.

A little crowd had collected round him while he was talking, and they nodded and stared at me intently as if worried that an outsider might not really believe that this was normality over there. A youngish-looking, middle-aged taxi-driver, who had simply driven his taxi several hundred miles to the Potsdamerplatz and walked across in the week before the wall went up, said: "Only about ten per cent of the actual Party people even believe in it all themselves, the rest are in it because it makes them *Bonzen* and gives them money and privileges."

THIS ORDINARY EVERYDAY disgust with the society in which they were expected to live is about as close to political ideology as you are likely to get with these refugees—and who in his senses would want to get any further? But of course some refugees are more non-ideological than others.

The solid, elderly man in a grey felt hat, a good grey raincoat, and brown shoes was pacing sedately up and down the pavement like a retired bank manager taking his constitutional. For a moment it was difficult to decide whether he was a refugee or some official connected with the camp. Only a very mottled port-drinker's nose gave him an improbably roguish air. "Yes," he said, "I'm a refugee." "Since before the wall went up?" "Just before." "How did you come over?" "Well, you see, I came over every month...."

All his life he had been in insurance, for most of it with the —— Insurance Company. But his home was in what became the East sector and of course there was no private insurance there, so he had worked for the State Insurance Company. Yes, the pay had been quite good. Quite enough for him and his wife to live on. But then, three years ago, he had reached retirement age and he and his wife had a pension of only

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300 East marks a month—"and that was quite impossible to live on."

"How did you live then?"

"Ah, well, you see I also received a pension of 500 marks from the —— Insurance Company in the West."

"You were allowed to receive it in the East sector?"

"Oh, no." His eyes were suddenly very large above the mottled nose and he shook his finger warningly. "Certainly not."

"Then how...."

"I used to come over every month and fetch it myself. They would only pay in East marks but of course it made all the difference. With 800 marks a month we could get by in the East sector."

"You were allowed to do this?"

Again the fearful expression as if I myself were courting arrest and he wanted to warn me. "It was strictly forbidden."

"And yet you did this every month?"

"Every month for several years and each time I tell you the fear was terrible"—and he made exactly the same gesture over his heart as the young lorry driver had done. "Then when we heard that we might be prevented from crossing and realised that that would mean we would have only 300 marks, we had to come to a decision, for on 300 marks a month life would have been impossible...."

THE LAST COUPLE I spoke to in Marienfelde were a quiet, middle-aged tailor and his wife who had come over after August 13th. They both wore spectacles and were dressed in identical raincoats of a rather military cut with leather-type buttons and tabs on the shoulders. When I asked them if they had been given these coats in the camp: "Oh no, we bought these in the East sector. One or two things over there are not too bad, you know." They wanted to be fair.

They had been living in a house in Neukölln, in one of the strange border anomalies of Berlin. This house and its back door had been in the east, but the front door gave on to a pavement that was in the west. Thus, most of the time, to get into their own East sector they went out on to this western pavement and round the corner into the east. On August 13th barbed wire had been put up at the corner, and only those who lived in the house had been let through to go in and out at their own front door. The tailor had long been having a difficult time there. He worked on his own. "Yes, they let us work privately if we wanted to, but there was continual pressure to join the co-operatives and they forced us to charge prices that were even lower than the co-operatives." So when they had seen the barbed wire go up at the corner he and his wife had decided to leave. Unfortunately they had been expecting her mother on a visit from the Zone the following evening so it was decided that he should go while he could and that his wife should stay to see her mother and then follow him. She was glad she had done this because in fact her mother had not been allowed through the barrier on the corner or indeed into the house at all and only by going down to the barbed wire itself was the tailor's wife able to see her.

That evening, everyone in the upper floors of the house was told that they were no longer to use the front door, and the people who lived on the ground floor, who could still use it—"all the people on the ground floor were Party people" —were given the job of keeping watch on it.

The next day the tailor's wife settled down to plan her own little escape.

"I thought and thought what to do. Then I put on an apron and collected a basketful of wet clothes to take out for wringing and went down the stairs. The woman who lived in the flat by the front door was standing looking out from her doorway into the hall and I thought for a moment it would be no good. But then she said: 'Ah, Frau S——, off to wring out some clothes?' and I said 'Yes, just on my way to wring out some clothes,' looking in the direction of the back. Then she said: 'Ah, well, I've got a letter to write,' and went into her flat. So I quickly turned back from the bottom of the stairs and ran out of the door.... I passed under the window where she was writing the letter as I crossed the pavement and I heard her call out: 'I thought you said you were going to wring out some clothes, Frau S——!' But I felt too frightened to laugh at her."

She too made the same gesture over her heart as the Insurance man and the lorry driver.

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International Commentary

The Impossible Defensive

By Richard Lowenthal

On the opening day of the XVI General Assembly of the United Nations, the Soviet Government made two significant pronouncements on its ideas for their future role. In Moscow, editorials in the leading papers confirmed in black and white its willingness to make the "Free City of West Berlin" the future headquarters of the U.N., under U.N. control and protection. In New York, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko announced his government's refusal to agree to the election of any single Secretary-General of the U.N. in succession to Dag Hammarskjöld, and its determination to use the opportunity of the latter's tragic death to force a change in the Charter that would extend the Soviet right of veto to the executive machinery of the world organisation. Taken together, the two proposals amounted to a programme for a paralysed U.N., residing in a defenceless city surrounded by Soviet territory.

There is a symbolic aptness in the manner in which the Soviet challenge to the U.N.'s capacity for action and the Soviet offensive against Berlin have thus become linked: for the essential objective of both is the same. As has been repeatedly pointed out in these commentaries,* the actual shift in the world-wide relation of forces between the Soviet bloc and its opponents, combined with Mr. Khrushchev's ideological overestimation of that shift, has led to a situation in which the Soviets feel able for the first time to play directly for world-wide stakes—to tip the world balance of power decisively in their favour without engaging in nuclear world war. To achieve that, they need a free hand in local conflicts, unhampered by effective intervention of the U.N. But they also need to reverse the trend of developments in the one contested region where it has so far gone against them, and which is still of crucial importance for the overall balance—in Europe. That is the meaning of the Berlin issue in the context of Soviet world policy to-day; and that is the basic reason why its solution by some local compromise or other is so much more difficult than many Western commentators (and quite a few Western political leaders) seem to imagine.

Ever since Mr. Khrushchev first raised his demands for a "German Peace Treaty" and a new status for West Berlin in the autumn of 1958, Western discussion of the appropriate response has been bedevilled by the widespread belief that he either did not really care for the subject at all, or that he did so for strictly local and ultimately defensive purposes only. Thus, it was long suggested that Khrushchev had posed a threat to the vulnerable Western position at Berlin merely in order to "force a summit meeting" and there crown his co-existence policy by an agreement on a permanent nuclear test ban and other steps towards controlled disarmament. Yet events have since shown that he is interested in disarmament only as a slogan and had no more use for a summit meeting once there was no prospect that it would result in the granting of the substance of his demands on Berlin and Germany.

Again, it was widely assumed in the West that Khrushchev had opened the "Berlin crisis" because the situation in his East German satellite, and above all the steady drain of refugees, was causing him acute anxiety. (The plain fact was that when he made his first move, the East German economy was more of a going concern and the refugee drain smaller than at any previous time.) So persistent was the

* See *The Changed Antagonist*, ENCOUNTER, January 1961; *The Dangerous Year*, June 1961; *The Balance and the Mission*, August 1961.

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Western illusion that Khrushchev was acting under the "pressure" of the refugee problem that when the drain was stopped on August 13th—by a measure which it had been all the time in Khrushchev's power to take—a number of high-placed Western officials welcomed this inhuman and illegal move almost with relief, arguing that the climax of the crisis must be over now that Khrushchev's "defensive" purpose had been achieved by unilateral action. Since then, the continued Soviet threats against the Western air corridors and the resumption of Russian atomic tests (announced on the explicit grounds that super-bombs of up to 100 megatons were needed to deter the West from defending its Berlin rights by force) have shown how mistaken was that hope.

THE MOST PERSISTENT of these "defensive" interpretations of the Soviet offensive on Berlin and Germany, and the one most encouraged by its originators, is that they wish to achieve a clear and internationally recognised frontier for their European empire "before the West Germans get atomic arms." The argument is that the West Germans should be forced by their NATO allies to recognise not only the Oder-Neisse frontier between Poland and what is now Eastern Germany, but the permanence of German partition, and to drop the Federal Republic's claim to be the only legitimate German state. The Soviets pretend to fear that unless that claim is renounced—as it would be renounced if West Berlin became a "free city" under an international statute agreed with the East German régime—the West Germans will sooner or later involve the world in nuclear war in its pursuit.

There is, of course, any amount of evidence that fear of West German "militarism and revanchism," based on the bitter memories of Hitler's war and for years assiduously fostered by Soviet propaganda, is real and deep among millions of people in Russia and Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe (including many sincere opponents of the Communist régimes there). But there is no evidence at all that this fear is a serious motive influencing the policy of the Soviet leaders who direct that propaganda. If it were, one would have expected them to have long tried to prevent or limit West German rearmament by offering German reunification, or at least the restoration of political freedom for Herr Ulbricht's unwilling subjects, in return for some form of disengagement, of regional neutralisation, or arms limitation. Yet the record shows that the Soviets, under Mr. Khrushchev's leadership, have persistently refused to discuss any such ideas ever since the end of the Geneva summit conference of 1955, and that Khrushchev personally has repeatedly gone out of his way to discourage the German Social Democrats from hoping that West German acceptance of some form of neutral status and arms limitation would be an acceptable price for the freedom of East Germany. In fact, the high degree of national unity in support of the NATO alliance that exists in West Germany to-day is largely due to Khrushchev's own policy. The Soviets have deliberately preferred to see West Germany fully re-armed—and, as they believe, ultimately re-armed with nuclear weapons—within NATO rather than to see her armaments limited under some European security agreement in return for abandoning Communist rule in East Germany. Nor is this attitude incomprehensible. The Soviet leaders know what they do not allow their peoples to know—that the leaders of the Federal Republic are no suicidal maniacs of the Nazi type and will never unleash nuclear war in support of their national demands.

BUT IF the Soviet demands on Berlin and Germany were neither motivated by an acute crisis of the East German régime (to some extent, of course, by speeding the flight of refugees to panic proportions, they created such a crisis) nor by acute fear of the consequences of West German rearmament, what is the urgency behind them? If Mr. Khrushchev is not reacting to the pressure of real or supposed dangers, as our Western governments normally do, must we assume that he is a superman carrying out a predetermined master-plan for world domination? There is no need to see Soviet expansion in such mythological terms. Khrushchev and his associates certainly differ from their opponents in their confident, militant pursuit of an ideologically defined, world-wide, long-term *aim*—an aim to which the Bolshevik leaders have clung over more than forty years and three revolutionary generations. But they do not, and indeed cannot, follow a long-term *plan*: just like their opponents, they have to react to unforeseen situations all the time. The difference—and it is a big difference—is merely that as they become stronger, the vision of their world-wide aim enables them to react less and less to dangers, and more and more to opportunities. In other words, they pass from the defensive to the offensive as and when they see a chance, because they know in which general direction they want to move forward. Their opponents all too often have no other international aim than the Utopian dream of stability, and are thus tied to the defensive.

In the present case, the Soviets regard the achievement of nuclear parity as an opportunity to exploit the vulnerable geographical situation

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of the West in Berlin in order both to repair a basic weakness (not an acute danger) in their own position, and to undermine a vital position of Western strength. While the world-wide relation of forces has been changing in favour of the Soviet bloc in recent years—by Soviet industrial and military development, by the rise of Communist China, and by the disintegration of the Western colonial empires—events in Europe have gone a different way ever since Stalin's immediate post-war conquests were brought to a halt (between 1947 and 1949) by the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, and the NATO alliance. Non-Communist Western Europe has developed an unprecedented degree of unity, economic dynamism, and social stability. The loss of most of its former colonial possessions, which both diehard imperialists and doctrinaire Communists had believed indispensable for maintaining the standard of living of the West European workers, has not prevented that standard from rising higher than ever. It is many years since anybody has seriously worried about the risk of Communist revolution in the homelands of Marxism and of the modern industrial working class. By contrast, Communist-ruled Eastern Europe has seen anti-Communist popular risings—in East Germany in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956—which could only be crushed by renewed Soviet military intervention; and though open revolt has since given way to a mood of resignation, its peoples have retained the sense of living under an alien régime which they would eagerly discard at the first opportunity (or from which millions of them would gladly escape individually, as the East Germans have proved for years).

Thus in a world situation otherwise developing in favour of the Soviet bloc, Europe has strikingly remained an area of Communist weakness and Western strength. Yet Europe, with its industrial and military potential, its high level of productivity, its wealth in skilled technical, scientific, and administrative cadres, is still by far the biggest single prize in the struggle for the allegiance of mankind. Without reversing the trend in Europe, the Soviets cannot hope to convince the bulk of the younger nations that Communism is really a valid model for the new industrial society they all seek to create, and not just a particularly cruel and costly form of transition to that goal to which they may well find their own alternatives. The contest for Europe is thus crucial for the Soviet effort to tip the world balance of forces decisively in their favour; and divided Germany, where two states inhabited by people of one nation border each other, is the place where any attempt to reverse the trend must be made —with isolated Berlin as the obvious lever.

IN THE RUSTY CHAIN that holds down the Soviet's East European empire, the East German régime is the weakest link. Its special weakness is not chiefly due to its special ugliness —though it is unusually ugly in a near-Stalinist manner—nor only to the fact that its unwilling subjects until recently had the possibility to escape. The steady stream of refugees which made East Germany Europe's only state with a declining population was a symptom rather than a cause of fundamental instability. The basic peculiarity is, of course, that the people of Eastern Germany form part of a nation whose majority freely governs itself in the prosperous Federal Republic; thus it has never been possible for them, as has become possible for the Poles and Czechs in some respects at least, to identify the cause of the Communist régime with their national cause.

To cure this weakness, it is not enough to stop the mass flight by physical barriers. It is not enough to cut off family relations, intellectual contacts, religious community ties across the border. It is not even enough for the people of East Germany to realise—as they have long ago —that no concrete prospect of national reunion can be foreseen as of now. What is needed, as Khrushchev and Ulbricht have clearly understood, is that the West should co-operate in making the East Germans accept the finality of their fate: that the Federal Republic should abandon its claim to be the only legitimate German state, and that West Berlin should cease to be a symbol of that claim, as it is now by the free decision of its people to adopt West German currency, laws, and political institutions. The demands for the recognition of East German "sovereignty" and legitimacy by a Peace Treaty—or, if the West refuses to sign that, by negotiations following its conclusion—and for a new status for West Berlin, agreed with the East German state and ending Berlin's ties with the Federal Republic, are thus inextricably linked. They are the twin conditions for stabilising the Communist régime imposed by the Soviets on East Germany.

Yet such is the nature of the situation in Berlin and Germany that this "defensive" objective of stabilising the East German régime cannot be achieved without an "offensive" impact that would shatter the stability of West Berlin and West Germany, and therefore ultimately of Western Europe. To begin with West Berlin, the preservation of its freedom in the midst of a hostile totalitarian state depends on its protection by a veto-free, Western garrison and on its membership in the West German currency, trade, and taxation area. Under any scheme for a "free city" status so far put forward, including those envisaging United

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Nations tutelage, either or both of these conditions would be destroyed. A quadripartite garrison including the Soviets or a U.N. contingent—the two alternatives suggested by Mr. Khrushchev—could not be relied on to prevent the take-over of the local administration by armed Communist civilians brought in from outside, because neither would be free to take immediate counteraction. Yet such a coup would only be an exact repetition of what happened in East Berlin during the blockade, starting the split through the city which has now been frozen by Herr Ulbricht's wall—a repetition which so far has been prevented in West Berlin only by the presence of NATO contingents. An international city not forming part of the West German economy would either become dependent on the surrounding East German economy, or its citizens would have to live exclusively on taking in each other's (and the U.N.'s delegates') washing—apart from such subsidies as that chronically insolvent body could spare from time to time. At present, Berlin maintains full employment as an industrial city linked to the West German economy, and is subsidised only in the same automatic and continuous way as other financially weak member states of the Federal Republic—by contributing taxes to the common pool in relation to its earnings and receiving a share of the common budget in relation to its needs. With both the automatic protection of the city's political freedom and the automatic support of its economic independence gone, demoralisation, mass emigration, and ultimate political collapse would only be a matter of time.

SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD, of course, spell a spectacular defeat of the West at a point where its political strength was most strikingly manifested in the past. Long before it was fully consummated, it would begin to undermine national cohesion and self-confidence in the Federal Republic, as well as the confidence of its citizens in the Western alliance. I do not share the view, expressed in these pages last month by Sebastian Haffner, that the West Germans chose to give the Western alliance priority over their aspirations to national unity in a "magnanimous" act of solidarity, and that if they felt abandoned in these aspirations by their Western allies, they would "turn East" in the hope that the Soviets would drop the East German régime and permit a united, pro-Soviet Germany to live in internal freedom. I believe that very few Germans still cling to the illusion that the Soviet giant of to-day would be willing to treat a non-Communist Germany as an equal partner in the spirit of Rapallo or of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and that most of them have learnt by bitter experience to value internal freedom more highly than national unity so long as they cannot have both. But granted that they chose the Western alliance for this realistic reason, they would certainly feel both betrayed and threatened if their allies proved unwilling to stand by the claim that the Federal Republic was the only legitimate German state, and unable to protect effectively the freedom of 2·2 million West Berliners. While the resulting sense of let-down would not make any large numbers turn pro-Soviet, it would certainly produce widespread nationalist and neutralist resentment of a kind that would enormously diminish both West Germany's domestic stability and its value as an ally of the West.

In short, I believe that if Mr. Khrushchev could force the West to concede his programme for the stabilisation of his East European empire, he would also be well on the way to undermining the stability of Western Europe and thus to achieving a world-political break-through of vast proportions.

THE WESTERN governments seem as well aware of the immensity of the stakes of the crisis as its Russian originators, and appear determined to maintain what they regard as the essentials of their rights at Berlin—military presence, free access, internal freedom of the West Berliners—because of the world-wide repercussions of a retreat at this testing point. Only that mutual awareness explains the "contingency planning" and military build-up of the West, the crescendo of Soviet nuclear brinkmanship, and the resulting universal sense of deadly peril. Everybody feels that the risk of nuclear escalation would be much more serious in a test of force directly affecting the world balance of power than in any peripheral conflict, where the losing side could more easily accept defeat. At the same time, the mistaken belief that Khrushchev was acting under some urgent pressure lends added weight to his threats: a power that pursues a supposed opportunity to gain a decisive advance without major risk can be stopped by determined proof that the opportunity is not there, combined with minor technical arrangements designed to save its face. In this writer's opinion, Khrushchev could be stopped in that way. But if it is believed that he is fighting to avert some acute danger, his threats have to be taken that much more seriously; hence it is only human that the desperate nature of the risks supposedly involved should have encouraged an equally desperate search for compromise solutions in many Western minds. The common denominator of nearly all such proposals is the attempt somehow to satisfy the "defensive" preoccupa-

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tions of the Soviets—to assure them that the West has no intention of exploiting the weaknesses of the East German régime, and perhaps even to help in stabilising it—while avoiding the "offensive" impact of Khrushchev's own demands. Or, to put the same idea in different words, to preserve the Western position in Berlin in a "defensive" posture while voluntarily depriving it of any politically "offensive" function.

There is, I believe, a fundamental fallacy underlying all these ideas. It is the delusion that the political stabilisation of the East German régime was not only compatible with the continued stability of the Western position in Berlin and Germany, but was even in some sense in the West's own interest. Because the West has not the power to dislodge a régime which lies in the Soviet military sphere and which the Soviets are determined to defend against its own people by military force if necessary, it is argued that it is against the interest of the West that such a régime on its borders should be continuously threatened by crisis. For the weakness and instability of the East German régime may sooner or later lead to another popular rising, and that would present the West with the familiar dilemma of either intervening at the intolerable risk of world war, or letting down freedom-loving people for whose action it shared at least indirect moral responsibility if it had helped to maintain the instability of the régime.

That such considerations had come to dominate not only a large sector of Western public opinion, but also the actions of the principal Western governments (including that of the Federal Republic), was proved by their behaviour during the week following the East German coup of August 13th. A state frontier was drawn right through the city of Berlin in open defiance of existing four-power agreements. That the Western powers did not attempt to prevent that action by force was inevitable as it took place within the Soviet sphere of military power. But that they waited so long before they even reacted with a demonstration of their own control on their side of the new border was due exclusively to their fear that any demonstration might encourage acts of popular despair on the Eastern side. We have it on Dr. Adenauer's own authority that his much-resented tardiness in coming to Berlin was caused by the same fear. For an entire critical week, while Ulbricht built his wall and displayed his tanks to cow his own people, the entire weight of Western propaganda to these people was directed to make them accept the new state of affairs—and the vindictive measures against many of them which the régime could at last afford after blocking the escape routes—without any acts of desperate resistance. High-placed Western diplomats actually congratulated themselves on the prospect that this successful act of "stabilisation" would reduce the seriousness of the crisis.

Yet the same events also illustrated the elementary truth that, contrary to those expectations, the position of the East in Germany cannot be stabilised without undermining that of the West. The Western powers paid for their caution and complacency in the face of Ulbricht's coup with the first severe blow to the morale of the West Berliners—a morale that is the foundation without which their Berlin position cannot be held. Dr. Adenauer paid with the loss of his parliamentary majority—an event that need not in itself weaken West German loyalty to the Western alliance, but in the circumstances appeared to be at least partly the result of spreading doubts about its value. And the Communist powers, sensing weakness, stepped up their threats.

EVERY FURTHER STEP taken by the West in the direction of helping to consolidate the East German régime—in particular, every weakening of the institutional ties between West Berlin and the Federal Republic, and any political negotiation with Eastern Germany about Berlin—would inevitably further reduce the solidity of the state that is now NATO's foremost member on the European continent. But it is equally true that the political freedom of Berlin and its ties with the Federal Republic cannot be successfully defended without retaining, by their very existence, an "offensive" impact on the East German régime. Even if the wall continues to block the route of escape, even if West Berlin ceases to harbour any "centres of intelligence and subversion" (as, of course, it should so cease), even if no East German citizen can any longer listen to a West Berlin radio station, the mere continued existence of a genuine German state in the West, and of West Berlin as its political outpost, will continue to show up the artificiality of the foreign-imposed East German régime and to prevent it from acquiring the loyalty of its subjects. Co-existence in Germany is as harshly "competitive" as that.

IF THE WESTERN governments understood that the Soviet and Western positions in Germany cannot both be stabilised together, they would have boldly countered Mr. Khrushchev's offensive with a political counter-offensive. Instead of allowing discussion to centre on the issues chosen by him—the "sovereignty" of the East German régime and the need for a new West Berlin statute—they would have publicly put forward their own proposals for a German Peace Treaty, offering a per-

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manent settlement of the German-Polish frontier and a security treaty limiting German long-range armaments but only in a framework of German unification. It seems unlikely that such an offer would have been acceptable to the Soviets in their present mood, but they could not refuse to negotiate on such a basis without destroying the "defensive" case for their own demands. Consequently, their own negotiating position would have been weakened and that of the West strengthened, both in world opinion and among the Germans in East and West.

By thus keeping up the pressure on the broader German question, the West would have been better placed even for defending its local rights in Berlin. True, we cannot force Mr. Khrushchev to negotiate on German unity, nor prevent him from signing a "peace treaty" with East Germany. But neither can he force us to renounce our Berlin rights. The final subject of negotiation with the Soviets may thus well be the incorporation of our rights in their treaty; after that, we should have to make technical arrangements with the East Germans (as the Federal Republic has long been doing), but could do so on a firm political basis negotiated with the Soviets and not with them. In such a case, West Berlin's political ties with the West need not be weakened; but such an outcome can only be obtained if the West enters the negotiations by opposing its own demands for German unity to Khrushchev's assertion of East German "sovereignty"—not if it offers a political accommodation with the East German régime.

But what about the consequences? Are the Western powers not justified in regarding continued East German instability as a danger to peace, and hence to their own interests? Is not the alternative the encouragement of hopeless uprisings which the West is unable and unwilling to support?

I do not think so. The instability of a foreign-imposed régime may manifest itself in many forms that diminish the effectiveness of the policies pursued by its rulers. In a totalitarian Communist state, a rising is a rare exception, made possible in 1953 and 1956 only by the unique crisis of authority in the Soviet bloc that followed Stalin's death. Even then, the West did not only have the choice between the military intervention that it rightly rejected and the prayerful passivity that it displayed. It *could* (and in my opinion *should*) have seized the opportunity to negotiate from a position of political strength, offering military disengagement from Central Europe in return for the freedom of its peoples. That opportunity does not now exist, owing to the changed relation of forces and to the corresponding hardening of Soviet policy. But neither does the risk exist of new risings, a prospect which continues to haunt the guilt-ridden imaginations of Western statesmen long after it has ceased to worry their Communist opponents.

What does exist is continued widespread disaffection manifested by the unwilling subjects of the East European Communist régimes in many different, indirect, and limited forms—ideological, economic, administrative. The Western powers cannot and should not try to imitate the Communists in seeking to "create" such resistance by "organising subversion" or even engaging in Cuban-style adventures, but they should have the moral and intellectual courage to recognise that, given the nature of the world-wide contest, the existence of these weaknesses in the Communist "camp" is just as much of an asset to the West as is the existence of political and social instability in pro-Western countries to the Communists. It is an asset precisely in the sense that it strengthens the position of the West in negotiations. To return to the example of the most specific manifestation of the instability of the East German régime, it is obvious that the Western position for negotiations on Berlin and Germany was stronger while the mass flight from Herr Ulbricht's pseudo-state lasted, and that the Soviets finally accepted the shameful necessity of building the wall rather than give the West a chance to exploit this weakness in the decisive phase of the crisis.

But the point is really of much wider application. During the phase of their preoccupation with the creation of a world-wide chain of military bases, the Western powers, and the United States in particular, got entangled with a number of reactionary and unpopular régimes which have since proved unstable. The Communists are naturally seeking to exploit this instability by various forms of subversion (sometimes but not always including civil war supported by foreign arms deliveries and instructors) and diplomatic intervention from the "Soviet camp." When this happens, enlightened Western opinion concludes that it is useless to try and prop up from outside governments that have lost the support of their peoples—and that the West should if possible forestall such subversion by switching its support to neutralist nationalists in good time, or else write off the country as lost to the Communists where it is too late for such a solution. In one way or another, a Western military position that had a poor political foundation has thus to be abandoned. Without actually engaging in war, the

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Soviet bloc has managed to exploit the political weakness to force this abandonment by a variety of combinations of internal pressure and diplomacy.

Now in Eastern Europe, it is the Soviets who are saddled with a number of reactionary and unpopular régimes (among which the East German case is the most obvious and indisputable). Yet whenever these régimes manifest their instability and give the Soviets trouble, many of those same enlightened Western voices hasten to suggest that we should do for unpopular Communist régimes what we cannot do for unpopular anti-Communist ones—*i.e.*, make an effort to prop them up from outside. Far from seeking to exploit in negotiations a Soviet weakness which is due not to our subversion, but to the inherent artificiality of those foreign-imposed régimes, we should, according to those strange "liberals," help the Soviets to consolidate their form of colonialism in the interest of peace and stability. This is a policy of unilateral political disarmament. It has the advantages and drawbacks of any form of unilateral disarmament: it eliminates all risk of war at the price of ensuring total defeat.

LET ME REPEAT once again that I do not believe that the West could or should imitate Communist methods of subversion—that it should encourage revolution or civil war, least of all in the explosive situation of Central Europe. I am merely concerned that the Western governments have become so obsessed with the imaginary *fear* of anti-Communist risings that they have become afraid of the normal diplomatic exploitation of the internal weaknesses of their Communist opponents. Yet without the will to make use of those weaknesses in negotiation, without the consciousness that we are strongest at those points where the peoples on both sides of the border are on our side, it is impossible to have a world policy that is both defensive and offensive—that not only yields positions that have become untenable but also gains ground where Communist tyranny has manifestly failed. And without the will to retain this freedom for political offensive, it is impossible in the long run to prevent the world-wide victory of the totalitarian Communist system or even, in the short run, to defend successfully the Western position at the testing point that is Berlin.

Shadow Love

Shadow love and shadow kisses,
Shadow life—how strange, did you,
You poor fool, believe all this is
Changeless and forever true?

Now like a dream it's gone—and yet
How safe we felt and sure to keep
All that our hearts—but hearts forget
And our eyes have gone to sleep.

Elliot Felkin

Translation of Heine, "Schattenküsse, Schattenliebe"

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Nigel Dennis

Arthur from the Barge

A Study of Last Words

THE problem of how to stay intact in times of increasing fission so exercises people to-day that they think little about what they will say at the moment when the problem proves too much for them. A man will make exact arrangements for his posterity in respect of bonds, real estate, furniture and yachts, but will make no provision at all for his last words, choosing to die verbally intestate. We say "choosing," as if he so willed this situation, yet the truth is, he wills nothing but the common-or-garden paraphernalia we have listed above: a lifetime of incessant talkativeness winds up with "No comment."

To grasp the uniqueness of the present situation, we have only to run over the deathbeds of the last two thousand five hundred years. We find there, from Ancient Greeks to Eminent Victorians, a tireless struggle to shape the last breath into some interesting comment upon the all-too-common condition the speaker has reached, or, failing that, some little spoken token of personal concern. The very curtain of our civilisation rises with Socrates exiting upon his famous line: "Crito, we owe a cock to Esclepius; see you that it is paid." It starts to fall at the beginning of this century, with Samuel Butler asking his secretary anxiously: "Have you the cheque-book, Alfred?" This little diptych shows clearly that though the hereafter may shift with time from the Elysian Fields to the Bank of England, there is no alteration in the responsible man's determination to fulfil Mrs. Beeton's great injunction: "Clear as you go."

IN DEMANDING LAST WORDS from contemporary deathbeds, we have no wish to tax with a heavy duty men who have spent their lives satisfying the revenue man and have yet to spend the initial period of their deaths furnishing their last post-mortem contributions. We reject entirely, for example, the killing effort demanded by Tennyson in *Morte D'Arthur*, where the line "Then *slowly* answered Arthur from the barge..." (our italics) is followed by some five hundred ambling words all bitted-and-bridled with colons and semi-colons: such leisurely verbosity may make good ballast in the barges of Laureates, but it could only seem long-winded in the wards of modern hospitals, where nurses are too much on the run to be forever settling down at bedsides with ball-points and memorandum-books. Nor do we demand any particular *sort* of last words, preferring to set down here, as models to the living, examples of what the dead have achieved already precisely in richness and variety of expression.

But why *models*, demands the grumbler: are last words not spontaneous? We have a short answer to that: yes, many last words *are* spontaneous, but it takes a more-than-average man to make them *appropriate*. How many living judges of the High Court, for example, could trust themselves to match the perfect judicial surliness of Lord Chief Justice Gordon Hewart, who passed away on a spring morning of 1944 growling: "Damn it! There's that cuckoo again!"? How many modern matrons think to equal the sublime amnesia of Mrs. Frances Trollope, who was told that her son Anthony's novels were selling well in America and only said, as she went: "*Who* is Anthony? And *where*, pray, is America?" And we should like to meet an expiring politician who could be told by a young woman that she was going to church and could give her the beautiful and wondering answer of the dying William Ewart Gladstone: "To church? How nice! How charming!"

Luck, admittedly, may come to the bedside of the unprepared. It came to Chekhov, who died saying with a smack of the lips: "It's a long time since I drank champagne" and was then conveyed to burial in a freight-car stamped "Fresh Oysters." But every statistic is against this sort of brilliant coincidence. Usually, the man who is too lazy, too stubborn, or too optimistic to prepare his last words, trots out something completely uninteresting or wildly unsuitable. We may be sure that if O. Henry, that master of the surprise end, had not been surprised by his own, he would have left us with

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something more subtle than "Send for Mr. Hall!" (his solicitor). A little advanced study of theology could only have improved the last cry of President Obregon's assassin: "Long live God!" More caution, under the circumstances, might have worked wonders for Emile Zola, who, opening the window of his gas-filled bedroom, was heard to say as he dropped dead: "Perhaps some fresh air will do us good." Yet even this *gaffe* is not so embarrassing as that of the eighteenth-century Radical, John Wilkes, who, caught by death in the act of dictating an apologetic letter (he had neglected his correspondence), was last heard to say: "No sooner did I take a pen in my hand than I felt as if I were dying."

SPONTANEITY, OF COURSE, will always have die-hard supporters. We, ourselves, cherish the legend that the sight of a donkey eating figs so amused Aristophanes that he died then-and-there of hilarious apoplexy: this is a proper end to satire. We think it good that Anthony Trollope should have died the same way, through listening to a reading-aloud of Edgar Anstey's comic novel, *Vice Versa*: we have no other example of one English novelist making the supreme sacrifice for another. But no one will deny that these are examples of last laughs, not last words. Moreover, the fated man is *receiving* last words, not *providing* them, and is thus taking with him what he should be leaving behind. How well the great Molière understands this responsibility when, asked if he wants the doctor to come in, he answers with his last breath: "No. I'm too ill to see him." How close to Molière the great Disraeli: he is told that Queen Victoria may visit his bedside and has the wit to murmur: "Why should I see her? She will only want to give a message to Albert." And let us say that in this matter of bequeathing wry and sardonic felicities, women have always been the equals of men. Goethe's dying mother, invited to a party by people ignorant of her condition, replies: "I must ask to be excused, as I have to die:" we wish that more of this dry courtesy had passed into *Faust*. "If you'll hold on a moment, *Monsieur le curé*," says Madame de Pompadour as the priest makes for the door: "we'll go together." "Oh, Father, how happy you've made me!" exclaims a dying eighteenth-century Frenchwoman, when her confessor complains that her lover's carriage is standing at the door: "I was feeling *quite* forgotten." Women, too, often display an enviable vitality. "To Paradise—quick, quick—*gal*lop, *gal*lop!" cries Louis XV's daughter, "Madame" Louise. "Put it down, you hussy; do you think I cannot help myself?" barks Mrs. David Garrick to the maid who pours her a cup of tea: coming from a woman of ninety-eight, such last words are breathtaking.

LEST such examples seem daunting to the average man and woman, let us say reassuringly that there is nothing *competitive* about last words; on the contrary, there is, to quote Mrs. Beeton once more, "A place for everything, and everything in its place." All we suggest is that a man express his own character and interests to the bitter end: if he makes up his mind in advance to do this, his last words will usually follow on quite naturally from his earlier ones. When Lord Chief Justice Tenterden turns to a non-existent jury and dies saying: "Gentlemen, you are dismissed!" he is as much himself as is Lagny, the German mathematician, who is asked, "What is the square of 12?" and dies saying "144." Hegel, a grumbler to the last, shows it when he says: "Only one man ever understood me. And he didn't understand me." The painter Thomas Gainsborough and the economist Adam Smith agree most happily in their diversity, the first saying briskly: "We are all going to Heaven and Van Dyck is of the company;" the second, more soberly: "I believe we must adjourn this meeting to some other place." Dying women still have proper regard for their appearance ("Please tidy my hair," says George Sand's mother); dying doctors comment professionally upon their own condition ("My friend, the artery ceases to beat," says the great Haller); even dying liars attain to their greatest impostures ("I have lived as a philosopher, I die as a Christian," says Casanova). We expect from generals, who are used to organising important manœuvres, what we get from Marshal Foch—a finger pointed firmly at Heaven and the brusque declaration: "That's where I am going!" As for the Prussian king, William I, he speaks for all his breed when, hearing the choristers sing: *Naked we came into the world, and naked we shall go out*, he mutters, "No, not quite naked, I shall have my uniform on."

We concede that this business of hewing to one's last *can* lead to absurdity and even a sense of *anti*climax. We cannot admire the French naturalist, Lacepède, for saying: "I go to rejoin Buffon:" essaying both the sublime and the

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scholarly, this pedant falls between two schools. "I thank God for my life. Bid farewell to the College," says Benjamin Jowett of Balliol: by putting first things first, he declines to the last. "Give my love to the (Royal) Academy," says the painter, Lord Leighton—provoking us to retort with the last words of St. Stephen: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"

But these are only minor criticisms, because only a very rude man, enjoying the prime of his own rude health, would think to condemn outright any last words of others: the courteous man does not pass judgment until he can speak from personal experience. Still, we are permitted to have preferences—to applaud Oliver Goldsmith's blunt comeback to the question: "Is your mind at rest?", "No. It is not;" to warm to Ellen Terry's tracing out with her finger the one word, "Happy;" to give our hearts to Charles James Fox, who had made a pact with his wife that neither should show sorrow at the other's death and, seeing her fighting back her tears, released her from their bond with the charming last words: "It don't signify, my dearest, dearest Liz; it don't signify." Moreover, our liking for last words can be made more sophisticated if we have some knowledge of their period backgrounds. In no age but that of Imperial Rome could a monarch have died with the wry words of Emperor Vespasian: "Alas! I suppose I am turning into a god." Only Stoic philosophy could evoke Emperor Augustus's bland query: "Well, would you say I had acted well in the farce of life?" Christianity, of course, has an immense roster of last words to its credit: they range from Andrew Marvell's lusty shout as he sank below the waves: "Ho for Heaven!" to Voltaire's dry query as his bedside lamp flared up: "What? Flames already?"

MANY SEE THEIR LAST WORDS as a last chance to sum up mis-spent lives, to hit back at critics, to acknowledge bits of advice which, if taken, might have postponed their last words considerably. Thomas Goffe, a Jacobean divine, was warned by his friend Thomas Thimble that marriage would kill him: when it did, Goffe generously admitted the fact by murmuring as he went: "Oracle, oracle, Tom Thimble!" Metternich, always a much-criticised man, repeated stoutly to the end: "I was a rock of order," while the satirist John Churchill confessed, rather more honestly: "What a fool I've been!" Many men regard their deaths as an object lesson to the living, and phrase their last words accordingly: "Jean, my good fellow, this is dying," said the painter Sir Thomas Lawrence to his valet. Victor Hugo, who had always preferred the hotter range of colours, put it in a more declamatory paraphrase, saying: "This is the struggle between the day and the night!" It is our personal opinion that dramatic remarks of this sort should be avoided by the common man, because the effort involved in speaking them so raises the blood pressure as to cause fatal results. Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, a healthy man, snatched up some papers, waved them at his critics and shouted: "Here is that will strike you dead!" Such was the Earl's vehemence, that, according to the chronicler John Aubrey, he instantly "fell downe starke dead."

MANY ambitious men leave more than one set of last words behind: to this day, the countrymen of the younger Pitt argue as to whether he went saying: "My country! How I love my country!" or "I think I could eat one of Bellamy's pork-pies." The same bickering smirches the verbal passage of "Sailor" King George V: did he ask, "How goes the Empire?" or, urged to try the salubrious air of Bognor, snap back what sounded like, "Oh, *beggar* Bognor!" "Turn me over, Jack," were the last words of the empire-builder Cecil Rhodes —but somehow the turnover has been so complete that they have come down the years as, "So much to do, so little done." These are examples of great men being *expected* to say what little men feel they *should* say, and thus being denied the right to speak for themselves. We cannot approve of this interference with the rights of free speech, and when Nietzsche's domineering sister, Elizabeth, informs us that her brother passed away with a happy shout of "Elizabeth!," we only conclude coldly that though *his* mind may have gone, *hers* remained active to his last. But the grossest example of this sort of meddling concerns the great Goethe. "Little wife, give me your little paw," he asked—and would have gone content, his wife's hand slipped into his, had not the attendant professors (for so we reconstruct the scene) staggered back appalled at the prospect of transmitting such an unintellectual message. Indeed, so fearful were they of being booted out of their sinecures at Bonn and Heidelberg if they dared to do so, that one-and-all began fiddling provocatively with the shutters and windows, causing Goethe to snap at last: "Open the other shutter, so that more light can come

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in!" In this way was the endearing "little paw" dismissed into outer darkness and the great, humanistic message: "More light!" sent humming down the ages from don to don.

We hope this awful example will, at least, shed more light on the fact that a man cannot be too careful not only as to the nature of his last words but as to the nature of those to whom he confides them. So careless was the mighty Rabelais in this respect that he left posterity with no less than five different sets of last words—a world record. Indeed, his prodigality so rouses our suspicions that we feel bound to make a special examination of his deathbed: on doing so, we find it to be non-existent. Nobody knows, or has ever known, just when or where Rabelais died; his Word Series has, in fact, been won entirely by self-appointed proxies. We think they have done jobs of which Rabelais, if he is still alive, must be feeling extremely proud*, but we insist nonetheless that the man who lets himself die verbally intestate surrenders himself as bullion into the mints of coiners. Indeed, as Rabelais' example proves, the more inaudibly a man dies, the more vociferous will be his reputation.

This brings us to a point of immense importance. One meets people nowadays who declare flatly that the whole business of last words has been imposture from Socrates to Butler. All dying remarks, they insist, are, and have always been, Rabelaisian, in the sense that they are post-mortem counterfeits from the dies of the living. What's more, such people urge, there is no limit to this catchpenny coggery, this bruiting of currency. Mr. A. coins what strikes him as a worthy phrase; Mr. B. caps it with a worthier; Mr. C., disgusted with both, pelts the deceased with pork-pies or refers him to Bognor. Passions flare, partisans pry up cobblestones, the dead man's heirs write protests to the Sunday papers —and within a few years, words that were never trotted out in the first place are jockeying for it for dear life.

If we accept the view of these critical sceptics, we are going to have to look back to an impoverished past and forward to a barren future. Probably, the only last words that sceptics will allow in the canon will be last ejaculations—like George I's unedifying bellow to his equerry: "To Osnabrück!" (death caught him going there). Even simple remarks like George Washington's "'Tis well!" will be excluded, because anything that suggests, even faintly, that the dying are not already as good as dead will be termed an intolerable deceit—which is only one step from the conclusion that dying itself is an unwarranted assumption. Thus, not only will the barge be pulled out from under Arthur, but he will be denied so much as a coracle.

IT IS when we ask what the sceptical case is based on that we understand the vehemence with which it is pressed. Last words (this is the brutal truth) seem to have become so rare that people cannot believe they ever existed. They can picture epochs when pterodactyls swooped and sabre-toothed tigers sprang, but they cannot imagine their forebears of those days saying with finality: "Don't worry, it's only going to roost" or "It's too old to have any teeth left." A doctor whom we questioned in the English Midlands put the whole matter in a sentence, saying: "I have attended five hundred deathbeds and have never heard any last words at all."

We were so astonished to hear this that we consulted a nurse who has worked in the wards of a big West London hospital for years. "Of course, you're quite right to doubt what a doctor says about deathbeds," she said, "since doctors aren't often present at them: they leave them to us. Still, I can't contradict him. I have never heard any last words. I have never even received a last request."

We approached one of her nursing colleagues, who replied that she was in the same barge. "We give them sedation hours before they go," she explained, "so they pass away without a word. Of course, it's a little different with Roman Catholics, because they don't approve of too much sedation and try to keep their minds clear. Still, I've never heard a word from them, either."

We moved on to Father Z., a Catholic priest, who hemmed and hawed a little nervously. "I'm afraid to speak my mind," he said, "because you'll think me a bigot. But my experience is that since all this talk about euthanasia began, I find many patients worried about being killed by the doctor." This led us to wonder whether the future of last words lay entirely in the hands of Roman Catholics and would consist chiefly of such remarks as: "You'll save me from Doctor

* "I go to seek a great Perhaps;" "As for you, you'll never be anything but a fool;" "I am greasing my boots for the last journey" (after receiving extreme unction); "Ring down the curtain; the farce is over!;" wrapping himself in his domino, or cloak: *"Beate qui in Domine moriuntur"* (Blessed is he who dies in the Lord/domino).

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X., won't you?" But kindly Father Z. destroyed even this faint hope by saying that even he had never heard any last words from anyone.

THE SAME DISMAL REPORT came from all our other sources. A Church of England vicar stood shoulder to shoulder with Rome on the issue, while most nurses we spoke to were surprised that the matter of last words should be raised at all, so silent were all their passing patients. Even nurses who attended habitually on elderly people dying in private houses had nothing to repeat. The reason was always the same. "It's the sedation, you see. They're not conscious for hours. And if they are, we can usually give them a little more." "I don't suppose you'd even hear last words on battlefields," said one nurse, "because now, with advanced dressing-stations, the medics get there too fast."

By now, as can be imagined, we were so worried by the gravity of the situation that our pulse-rate and temperature pointed the need to frame our own last words without delay. Then, at the eleventh hour, a kindly nurse telephoned helpful news. She had had a patient who, for two nights, saw a medieval monk beckoning to him from the foot of the bed: "If he comes again to-night, Sister, I shan't be able to resist him," said the patient—and these were his last words. "But I have never heard any others," the Sister added. "Most patients just thank you for all you have done and say how grateful they are."

We were heartened by this because it showed that modern man often retains to the end, and even expresses, warm appreciation for the person who is helping him out of the world—unlike the Duke of Buckingham, who only shouted "Villain!" when he was assassinated in 1628. It also led us to suspect that most of our informants did not class last words as such unless they referred to something as extraordinary as a beckoning, medieval monk. But these qualifications didn't alter much the fact that by insisting on dying easily, we pay for it by letting the art of last words perish miserably. Just as the pneumatic tyre has driven the straw from the street of the dying, so has the hypodermic silenced the householder. An occasional remnant of the old art still may reach us in the coming years from the Orient and the Pacific Islands, but such exports will grow fewer and fewer as dying standards rise throughout the world. Can anything be done, or have we democratic peoples left the matter, as we often do, so late that the Soviet Union will begin shortly to exploit it?

Two possibilities suggest themselves. The first is simply that we should accept as last words *remarks made before sedation starts*, since these, technically speaking, *are* last words. But after considering this suggestion very carefully, we feel bound to reject it. Last words spoken under such conditions are bound, at best, to be as uninteresting as Lord Chesterfield's ("Give Dayrolles a chair") and, at worst, unpleasant criticisms of the hospital staff, of the poor view from the window, of the unattractive appearance of fellow-patients, etc., etc.—in brief, remarks that would reflect small credit upon either the speaker or those spoken of. The second possibility, however, while much more daring, strikes us as more palatable. It is to move boldly in the other direction and *postpone all last words until after death*, when they can be invented by accredited friends and relations, or paid professionals. Our arguments in favour of this are the following:

(1) It would satisfy those who love the art of last words, yet satisfy equally the sceptics who think all last words are pure invention.

(2) It would be in keeping with tradition, because throughout the pre-sedation eras of man there have been post-mortem spokesmen eager and willing to speak for the dead.

(3) It would have beneficial results. Genuine last words, often spoken in haste, could be replaced by falsifications more in keeping with the character and dignity of the deceased.

(4) It would supply biographers with a conclusion to their books. Many biographers now have nothing to put on the last page except a tedious résumé of all the things they have said on the other pages.

(5) It would give each of us a chance to choose his official Last Wordster and so prevent the bickerings and differences that now attend upon the verbally intestate. Every Arthur could appoint his own Tennyson; every Tom, Dick, and Harry his desired Wordsworth. We could not expect uniformly good results, of course, nor could we insist that all last words be wholly flattering to the deceased. But what of that? Which of us can say, in all honesty, that his life and character demand praise, and praise alone? Do we not feel, rather, that in our last words a little astringency would *benefit* the puffed-up? Mrs. Beeton, as always, puts this very well when she remarks: "A spoonful of vinegar will set a poached egg."

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François Bondy

On Misunderstanding Eichmann

Letter from Jerusalem

THE CASE of *"General-Attorney of the State of Israel* V. *Adolf, son of Karl Adolf Eichmann"* in the District Court of Jerusalem is about to be closed. 1,500 documents, 120 statements from witnesses, and the "longest cross-examination of all time" constitute the material which the three judges are now working through before they come to the announcement and justification of sentence. A possible appeal and petition for leniency could postpone the final confirmation of the sentence for another year. According to the law of 1950, the part Eichmann played in the organisation of mass-murder, which has been demonstrated over and over again, makes anything other than a sentence of death unthinkable. Against the actual carrying out of such a sentence, men like Martin Buber have already protested, legitimately conscious of their position as representatives of a great humanistic Jewish tradition. Only by refusing to demand an execution (which would be the first ever in the young state of Israel) could the trial stand as the unquestionable and absolute opposite of the nightmare-world of totalitarian bureaucracy which Adolf Eichmann has so convincingly embodied for those who have witnessed this trial.

One thing is certain: if a palpable demonstration was required of the real nature of this world of blood and paper devoted to the pedantic annihilation of human beings, with its mixture of ideology, stupidity, and official zeal, then a more suitable defendant could not have been found. This has come out in every sentence of the preliminary hearing, in the cross-examination, in everything the man says—in his choice of phrase perhaps even more than in the content of his utterance, and whether he is making admissions or excuses.

The German-language text of the Eichmann interview conducted by Captain Less, which was given to the press in Jerusalem in some six volumes, containing 3,564 pages, offered some of us an extra advantage, as unavoidable as it was unsolicited, over other colleagues. Firstly, these were transcriptions of an interview which lasted from 29 May 1960 to 17 January 1961, taken from tape and corrected and approved by Eichmann personally. Secondly, it was available in no translation, and I can understand why—for Eichmann's German cannot simply be translated without being transposed. In his case, *der Stil ist der Unmensch.*

Admittedly, we have to distinguish between the locutions of a bureaucrat who is concerned to present himself as an insignificant cog in the wheel—("A peaceful citizen," as his counsel Dr. Servatius said: after all, has he caused a single Jew to be transported or gassed since the collapse of the Third Reich? . . .)—and the behaviour of the same man at a time when his rank, although not particularly exalted, gave him powers over life and death. His language is both that of a fussy bureaucrat, as well as the rough speech of a trooper. In Argentina, he appeared to be a great connoisseur of the copious Eichmann literature, and wrote marginalia in books that earned his disapproval (these were of such expressive force that they caused the court-room translators some embarrassment).

It is quite absurd to imagine Adolf Eichmann only recently acquiring his fluent administrative jargon, his *Amtssprache.* Not just now, when he is displayed to us like a specimen in a test-tube, but even then, as he sat in his military H.Q., he must have seen blood in terms of paper. All the more strange, how his colourless, lifeless language, which turns horror into an official

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record, still gets its own back in the clichés which he thoughtlessly uses—phrases which evidently evoke no visual impression for Eichmann himself—and in the way reality, however repressed and "digested," rises up, unheard and unconsidered, to take the macabre and ludicrous forms of, say, Karl Kraus' *Letzte Tage der Menschheit*. At a point in the interview where the discussion is of death sentences, Eichmann can happily say, *"Zum Henker"* or "Hang it all!" On the deportation of children from France into extermination camps ("first we must clearly define the degree of legality at this level") he comments: "At this point there were the beginnings of a carve-up (*Zerhacken*) in the administrative machinery" (by which he understands that the relative spheres of competence of the *SS*, the Security Police, the Foreign Office, and Vichy had to be clarified). And when he is telling how Himmler ordered mass-killings, he remarks: "He must have got the order from Hitler; otherwise he would naturally have exploded sky-high." The "naturally" is inserted by hand in the transcription, as a neat stylistic correction.

When questioned about the children of Lidice, all of whom (with the exception of seven "re-germanifiables," *Rückeindeutschungsfähigen*) he arranged to be moved to the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) camp to be slaughtered, and confronted with the documents which allow no evasion, Eichmann explains that the affair was handled by his office "purely transportation-wise" (*rein transportmässig*). And a little later in the same conversation, when asked about the fate of the inhabitants of the "evacuated ghetto" at Lodz, he comments rather testily: *"Das sind mir alles böhmische Dörfer,"* or "They're just a lot of Czech villages to me." But Lidice, of all places, was nothing of the sort to him. It was just a dim, vague memory: "I believe the place was actually demolished, I'm not sure, but I seem to remember something of the sort." But then Lidice "was dealt with on a general instruction from above"; *von oben* is an expression which means for him a particular administrative procedure, rather than, say, bombs falling from above. The same expression is then used of Litzmannstadt: *"Das wurde von oben bearbeitet"* (That was dealt with from above).

"Dealt with from above," "digested," "clearly defined," "sifted through," "special material," "administrative treatment," "child's play" (*eine Kindersache*, referring to child transports to death camps): the point of this smoke-screen of officialese comes out particularly clearly in two places. The first is when Eichmann is "clarifying" *das Ich*, the "use of the first person" in a letter he signed, but for which he no longer wishes to accept responsibility:

> Every Official, every Departmental chief writes in the "first person," the *Ichform*, it doesn't matter who is the Central Authority. This wasn't only true of the Police, it was true of every Central Authority. And he writes in the first person on behalf of his authority, in this case the Chief of the Security Police and the Secret Service—and I've said several times before, Captain, I couldn't hand out any information on my own initiative. Obviously, that would have been disastrous, and produced nothing but confusion, and would have led eventually to none of the people concerned knowing where they stood any longer, and endless questions of precedence would have come up, producing nothing but unpleasantness and chaos.

Unpleasantness, chaos, disaster, all were happily avoided by the Eichmanns, but only just. And it is not difficult to imagine how the official, even now that it is all over, still breaks out in a cold sweat at this vision of an insoluble conflict between the appropriate ministries of mass-murder as to their spheres of competence.

EVEN MORE REVEALING is this definition of "clearance" (*Abdecken*), a process with which Eichmann was constantly preoccupied, while in office and for years afterwards:

> From this point of view, everything was progressing furiously, and only the administrative machinery came in for abuse. But I've learnt from Müller how a careful processing of the documents was a prerequisite for any police action. Nothing could happen without it. And this is where the popular expression "to clear" came from. It was often used. People understood by this "clearing" not only how a man personally cleared himself so that he could always produce evidence—see for yourself, I haven't gone beyond my authority, everything took place and was arranged like this or that, in accordance with this or that directive; but also how it could serve to clear the office as well, so that he could produce evidence that the office itself hadn't exceeded its powers. In this way, disputes about limits of competence with other Central Authorities, and clashes of this sort could be more or less ruled out.

For Eichmann there is all the difference in the world between "setting in motion" (*veranlassen*) and "doing" (*tun*). The first is a matter for sensitive educated people, among whom he

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obviously still includes his chief at that time, the "taciturn" Heinrich Müller. The second is for the brutes, who found it amusing to drag their more delicately tuned colleagues down to their infernal depths. One example was Höss in Auschwitz:

> These people, when you went there, naturally got quite a kick out of making the whole thing as horrific as possible for a man straight from his desk, and making the whole thing as much of a shock for you as possible, and naturally they were always pleased when your nerves weren't up to their standards of behaviour, as they called them. Höss said to me once—I must have been in Auschwitz three times, two or three times—Höss told me that Himmler had been there, and Höss said that he actually went weak at the knees. And he meant this disparagingly—he was quite brutalised, was Höss.

Of himself Eichmann says—and it could stand as a motto over these 3,564 pages, or over the whole trial for that matter: *"Ich sass am Schreibtisch und machte meine Sachen"* (I sat at my desk and got on with my job).

BUT EVEN Adolf Eichmann is human and fallible in the last resort, and he was not spared the experience of being swept into an act of "brutality," the memory of which still weighs heavily on his spirit, and which he confesses with frankness and a measure of manly severity:

> I must now interpolate something I had forgotten. Dr. Löwenherz, released at that time from arrest, was a bit excited, as often happens of course, and started off by saying something that wasn't true, and in my anger, I lost control of myself, a thing I'm not normally prone to, and slapped him. It couldn't have hurt, of course not, because I didn't possess enough physical strength, but I didn't hide the incident. Later, I—when I was SS Major or Lieut.-Colonel—in front of my officers, officers under me, with Dr. Löwenherz present, I asked his pardon for having boxed his ears that time in the heat of the moment, and said I was sorry.
>
> I did this quite consciously, because—and you can check this easily enough if you want to—because in my subsequent administrative capacity I never permitted anyone in my department to be physically assaulted. That was my reason for apologising in uniform, and in front of my officers.

But apart from these exceptional cases, where his nerves gave way, he claims to be something quite different—the "typical Austrian" that everyone likes. In his dealings with the functionaries of the Jewish community in Vienna, he was, generally speaking, as polite as he was helpful. Consider this:

> When Dr. Rothenberg asked me early on whether I would let him emigrate to Palestine, not immediately, but after various things had been arranged and prepared, I said, when he first put it to me: "Let's wait a bit, until one or two things have cleared up, as long as it is really only a few months!" And then: *"Bitteschön"* (all right). And that's how it happened. When he came back, I said: "Certainly, Dr. Rothenberg, off you go, make all your preparations. You can go." And he went.

Someone else who did not go was the industrialist Storfer, former major in the Austrian Imperial Army, with whom Eichmann also had a lot of dealings. ("We worked together, from first to last, throughout the whole period.") Storfer's behaviour was "ill-considered," and he finished up in Auschwitz. There Eichmann had a "normal human meeting" with him, which had the great disadvantage that only one of the two participants is still alive to report on it. This is how it went:

> He complained to me of his miserable position. I said: *"Ja, mein lieber guter* Storfer, my dear fellow, there's a nice mess we've got ourselves into, eh?" and then I said: "Look, I really can't help you. Nobody can get you out, except by order of the *Reichsführer*. I can't get you out. Dr. Ebner can't get you out. I gather you've committed a *Dummheit* here, hidden yourself or tried to escape, which wasn't at all necessary, you know." And then Storfer said to me—I asked him how he was—and he said, he'd like to ask if he could be let off the work, it was heavy work. And then I said to Höss: "There's no need for Storfer to work." "Everyone works here," said Höss. So I said: "All right," I said, "I'll make out a chit to the effect that Storfer has to keep the gravel paths in order with a broom." They were only little gravel paths there, and he would have the right to sit down with his broom on one of the benches whenever he chose. "Is that all right, Herr Storfer?" I said. "Does that suit you?" And he was very pleased, and we shook hands and then he was given the broom and sat down on the bench. It was a great inner joy to me.... When I happened to come back from Hungary, I heard that Storfer had been shot."

EVEN AFTER THE MOST grisly experiences, Eichmann can be reawakened to humanity. He was once forced to witness a mass-shooting in Minsk (a rare thing for him). "The trench was full of corpses?" "Yes, it was full, it was full." Afterwards, *ohne Befehl*, he drove in his car to Lemberg.

> And when I get to Lemberg, I see the first agreeable sight after the terrible things I had

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seen. It was the *Bahnhof* which was put up to mark the occasion of Emperor Franz Josef's diamond jubilee; and since I personally have a great passion for this Franz Josef period, because I heard so many nice things about it in my parents' house and about the things that happened at that time—my step-mother's relations, you know, during that period were—as you might say—enjoyed a considerable social standing, spent a lot of money—that sight chased away for the first time—I've never forgotten it—otherwise I should certainly never have noticed the jubilee numbers carved on the *Bahnhof*—chased away those terrible thoughts of Minsk that I couldn't get rid of.

"*Mein lieber guter* Storfer" and "*bitteschön,*" as well as the passion for the Monarchy, are understandable when we learn that Eichmann "never hated the Jews, was never an anti-Semite." Horrifying as it may seem, it is quite possible that he is speaking the truth here. He had chosen *das Judenreferat*, the "Jewish sector," because it offered a chance of quicker promotion, and he was just as zealous and untiring in expediting emigrations as he was later on with the organisation of "transports." (In Jon Kimche's book, *Roads to Israel*, Eichmann does not come out badly.) It is at this point that we begin to suspect that this trial is about something quite different from the "great historical line of development" from Haman to Eichmann which the prosecution has traced, and which perhaps fits into Prime Minister Ben Gurion's way of thinking.

The same man who had a "human meeting" with "dear old Storfer," later tells us, with the evidence in front of him, how he drew up a document in sober officialese, authorising Globocnik, on Heydrich's instructions, to "conduct a further 150,000 Jews towards the final solution." They had already been killed. But the "clearance" was still not in order.

> At this time I received an order from Heydrich, to draw up the following letter for Globocnik: Heydrich dictated to me: I authorise you to conduct a further 150,000 Jews towards the *Endlösung*.
>
> I can't remember now whether he ordered the letter to be headed "*Head of SS and Chief of German Police in the Reichs Ministry for Internal Affairs*" and signed p.p. Heydrich, or whether he wanted it headed "*Chief of Security Police SD.*" I. . . .
>
> —But did the letter contain the words "conduct a further 250,000 Jews towards the final solution"?
>
> E.: 150 or 250, I think. I really don't know.
>
> —But that meant extermination and death!
>
> E.: Oh yes, oh yes. These Jews were already dead.
>
> —And Globocnik had them posthumously documented afterwards.
>
> E.: I think it must have been 250,000. I think so. Yes, Globocnik had it drawn up for a second time.
>
> —And this second posthumous order also passed through your Department, through your hands?
>
> E.: *Jawohl, jawohl.*

The linguistic Eichmann extends from "*bitteschön*" to this repeated "*jawohl, jawohl,*" and so does the real man. The Israeli psychiatrist who had to examine him pronounced afterwards: "This man is quite normal." He then added, "More normal than I feel myself after this examination."

ADOLF EICHMANN—a man without inner compulsions, zealous, ambitious, worried, complete with documented clearances, the Managing Director of Extermination—reminds me of a line in Paul Celan's magnificent poem, *Todesfuge*: "*Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*" (Death is a master craftsman from Germany), and the horror is inexpressibly heightened by the undertone of traditional East-European respect for the great craftsman and experts from this industrious land. And for this reason I never felt that the man in the glass case here in Jerusalem was any kind of a "legal pretext" or figurehead: he stood at the very centre of his trial, although not always in the sense that the prosecution saw him.

WHAT WAS HEARD in the long sessions of the trial added, I feel, nothing essentially new to what was already known from the documents. Nevertheless, it was right and necessary that the trial should have taken place, for it has brought these monstrous happenings, of which the new generation in all countries—even in Israel, even in Germany and Austria—has been only dimly aware, into the forefront of consciousness. I am sure that as far as the survivors of concentration camps, and the relatives and friends of victims are concerned, these reports have merely served to re-open old wounds; and in most cases, renewed suffering has overshadowed any satisfaction from seeing justice done.

The dark central fact about this past was that thousands of professionals were zealously and conscientiously employed in hunting, trapping, and killing human beings. Suitable "*Menschenmaterial*"—to use a popular Nazi expression correctly for once—was in abundant

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supply at that time in Germany and Austria; but I wonder if there is really anyone who would subscribe to the theory that it couldn't be found in sufficient quantities in every country in the world, given certain conditions....

Eichmann, the "filing-cabinet on a pile of corpses," as one German correspondent called him, is now known to us in a way that very few of our contemporaries are. Is there any significant difference between his present and his past? Anyone who looked at him fussing about with documents in his glass box, making sketches, interpreting maps, questioning and instructing his counsel on his special telephone, could easily imagine him as the SS Colonel of the 'forties. When asked why he never expressed any feeling of guilt in all his written and dictated recollections, the "filing-cabinet" admitted that this was so, but "that doesn't exclude the possibility of my endeavouring to deal with this question privately, in my own way." And no one is surprised to hear him say that his crony Sassan had been forced to liven up the reports he sold to *Life* Magazine because "officialese (*die Amtssprache*) was my only language." And indeed, he can discuss torture, misery, and murder entirely in terms of pencil-work, paper-work, and in-and-out baskets. But the accused was, I think, still right to insist, as against the public prosecutor, that he was first and foremost a *Befehlsempfänger*, a "receiver of orders"; and right again when he says on one occasion, with unusual immediacy: "Now that I'm the only one left, everything goes wrong and I'm in it...."

It was in the nature of his activities that they were only one part of a collective crime on a national scale, carried out by large numbers of people in highly differentiated capacities. Clearly, his greatest incentive was always the cultivation of a career, with all its little rewards and opportunities for the exercise of power, rather than any particular driving passion or private obsession. By trying to establish the opposite, Dr. Gideon Hausner cast more darkness than light on the essence of the totalitarian state in question. For with the exception of Hitler himself, no one there really carried "full responsibility" for anything; they were all receivers of orders, and could always invoke their "military oath," their "subordinate position," or "pressure of circumstances." Eichmann himself says that he consulted Müller *"wegen jedem Schmarren"* (on the most trivial issues), and the Gestapo-chief Müller, "an official of the old sort, a punctilious bureaucrat all the way through," behaved in the same way.

But how was it that Gideon Hausner, who succeeded after all in fastening some massive contradictions on the accused, nevertheless managed to give the impression rather of a criss-cross examination? Why did he get bogged down in details (*e.g.*, the circumstances under which Eichmann was sacked from Vacuum Oil) merely in order to catch him out in a not very telling lie? Why did he get so worked up, even confused, and try to get the accused to admit that he was a "liar" and a "half-wit"? Why did he rave at him, saying he wasn't "worthy to mention the name of Theodor Herzl" (earning an immediate rebuke from Landau, the President of the Court)? These questions are, I think, important, because it was Dr. Hausner's fault that this long trial never turned into a "great trial." My own impression was that Gideon Hausner was determined, at any price, to find in the accused the greatest conceivable quantity of personal malice or fiendishness in order to match the enormity of the events. He was looking for a completely personal guilt and a completely personal sense of guilt, and because he hoped to find too much, he never came to grips with the true characteristics of this type of *Durchschnitts-Unmensch*. He wanted a Pharaoh, a tyrant, a Shakespearean villain in the grand style, and found instead an official passionately guarding his little empire and trying to make it grow; a man with girl-friends in the towns where his official trips often took him, riding behind a motor-pool chauffeur towards a requisitioned villa; a man who helped the Jews to emigrate as eagerly as he later hunted them down, and who was himself incapable of thinking up anything like "the Final Solution."

Dr. Hausner obstinately insisted on trying to prove, in spite of inadequate evidence and psychological improbability, that this junior executive of Death had personally killed a young Jew for stealing fruit from "his" garden, and he didn't realise that he was only weakening his case by all this. He evidently felt that Eichmann's bureaucratic activities were not really "murder" in the same full sense of the word as a purely personal act would have been. But if he believed that, he had all the more reason to show up Eichmann's criminal activities, which were the point at issue, in their peculiar uniqueness, and in this way to provide a completely different basis for the trial. Hausner's search for

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the daemonic, for the man acting on his own, driven by uncontrollable urges, is, I suspect, connected with the fact that the Jews of Eastern Europe have for centuries regarded Germany as the home of *Kultur und Humanität*, and that many of them were so completely unable to grasp, even remotely, the brute fact of what the Germans did, that it all could only be explained on the assumption that those involved were possessed by some unique and monstrous mania. In a way, Hausner is too fundamentally decent a man to be able to see into the soul of a mass-murdering mediocrity. He knows all the facts, and has never really understood them. We respected the man, but was he really the right prosecutor?

THE THREE JUDGES examined the accused in the sessions of 20th, 21st, and 24th July in his (and their own) *Muttersprache*, and more was gained from these three "talks" than from the long cross-examination. Judge Rasch thoughtfully asked what had happened to the Kantian Categorical Imperative, which Eichmann saw himself living out, and the answer was: "Sticking to the regulations was the categorical imperative for the household use of the little man." And it was clear from the next few answers that orders from the *Führer*, even without written confirmation and in literal conflict with the regulations, counted as regulations. Kant and Eichmann, *der Denker für den Haugebrauch des Henkers*....

Judge Halevi enjoined him: "You may rest assured that the Court has nothing against you personally... and that our only concern is to arrive at the truth. If you wish this as well, then our aims are identical." Recalling, perhaps unconsciously, the "confession" of Klaus Fuchs, Eichmann said that he had never known crises of conscience, but that he had experienced a "split in consciousness ('controlled schizophrenia') where you rush from one side to the other." In an answer to President of the Court Landau, he said: "I could always console myself with the thought that I had no part in all these things." But it was not really so much that he was "split," as that he had "switched off" reality to the best of his ability; and as soon as he was forced to confront several separate realities isolated from each other, he tangled himself up in the most glaring contradictions.

This utter conformist, who was unlucky enough to specialise in something that lost its market value when times changed, this mediocre careerist, should be much more disturbing for the "normal" rest of us than an Eichmann possessed by black passions could ever have been. There were countless decent people who just didn't "join in"; thousands of Germans who were executed; innumerable Italian "fascist" officials who proved their "civilised self-control" by their refusals to assist the deportations (all spontaneous, humane impulses without benefit of Kant). And yet, what the world has been shown under glass here for four months is no fiend in human shape, but a harrowingly familiar type of official specialist. In times of crisis, these *"total Brauchbaren,"* these "100 per cent employables," are used for purposes which they themselves would never have suspected; and the discrepancy between their unemotional zeal, directed mostly towards being "in the clear" and "on the make," and the ensuing tragedies, is too immense to grasp. Nevertheless, that and perhaps no other is the truth which has come out of this trial and out of the grisly proceedings which it exposed in retrospect.

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Clancy Sigal

Song of the Open Road

TALK about human solidarity.

So there I was, back on the road. My faction had been decimated at the union convention in Detroit and my colleagues and betters said it was time for me to take off for a general polishing. A country club called the University of Los Angeles had accepted me. I was on my way to being a college boy. On Highway 112, out of Detroit, Dearborn, and dear old Inkster, Michigan.

I took a bus out to Dearborn, hefted my GI bag to the highway, and stuck up my thumb, which is about the most ancient reflex I have.

A succession of rides got me as far as Chicago which, it being my home-town, I politely by-passed. On the uphill side of Bloomington, Illinois, near the tail of Highway 66, the hopefully named Lincoln Highway, I got my first look at him. Or rather, his car. Because he zipped by me so fast my hat almost sailed off. A new yellow Buick. A big Buick (they don't make small ones). Wham, he went. Okay, fair enough.

Still Highway 66, a day later. Between Rolla and St. Louis, Missouri, he showed up again, one of the many cars which slammed past me as though I wasn't there.

I didn't see my yellow Buick the next day. But, on the following day, west of Tulsa and east of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, there he came, yellow and shiny despite the summer dust, big and new, and without me in it. He went past, at speed, again. I smiled and shouted a cheery hello.

It goes without saying that the man in the yellow Buick and I began to develop a *relationship*.

It wasn't a picnic, though. It rarely is.

THERE ARE TWO HIGHWAYS which in America are home to me. Well, no, not home. But when I am on them I don't feel so much a stranger. They run through the same kinds of fields and towns other highways do, and the same kind of people glance at you without really being interested, and there are the same motels and oak-shaded houses where families live without ever walking out to the pavement to see you go by. But Highways 30 and 66, usually I don't feel too bad, walking or riding or sleeping alongside them.

I think this is so not because they possess any uniquely endearing qualities but because I have always felt they belonged to me, like houses you rent. The rent I paid for the highways was the time I spent on them. You see, I never really *enjoyed* travelling. It was always something I had to do. Some people grow up where they are. I always grew up somewhere else. And to do that I had to use the highway. And it was the highway, the road that was the education.

A while ago, a boy wrote a book in which he says The Road Is Life. Well, that's right. The road *is* life. This particular young author was wrong, I think, in how he meant it, that the rhythm and texture and substance of the road were what make up an especially

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sublime version of life; anybody who's lived on it knows better. (And so, I expect, does he.) It's a lousy life. If you're on the bum, you're always at the mercy of the weather, standing half a chance of getting either frozen to death or sun-stroke on a patch of clear deserted highway half-way to Aunt Ella's nowhere, and at the mercy of car drivers who you know have seen you (*cf.* yellow Buick) and pretend not to; and if you don't have much money you spend most of your time being hungry and light-headed which means you can't enjoy the sights and scenery and have always to be on the watch for the policemen who will pick you up for vag and play games with you in the interrogation room whenever they are bored. (In Jackson Corners, Kansas, I was slapped on the head just for standing on the side of the road of a hot summer afternoon, and that was when I *had* money with me. In Venice, Missouri, I got my second worst handling from cops who took me in on a suspected child-rape charge because some truck driver wearing the same kind of field jacket I had on did some little girl a hundred miles away. When the information came over the station ticker-type that the Missouri state police had captured the right man, these local beavers escorted me to the edge of town, knocking me around all the way because I *wasn't* who they were looking for. On that one I wrote a letter to the Governor of the State of Missouri and the American Civil Liberties Union. The Governor never replied and the Civil Liberties Union wrote back, in essence saying they would have to have more particulars but even if I sent them it would cost me about four zillion dollars just for the minor delight of seeing some hick town judge spit in my eye. I could tell you a few more stories of how cops treat suspected vags on the road but one story would be like another.)

ONE problem is, as you grow older people in their cars are less and less anxious to pick you up. A *young* hitch-hiker they figure will be someone who will be too polite not to submit to their boasting, or listen to their troubles, or talk away the miles; at the very least he won't cut their throats. But as you grow older you can positively *see* the suspicion whip past on their faces as they don't pick you up. This is especially true when some damn maniac scabs on all of us by murdering some whole family for ten bucks. For months afterwards it's tough on the highway. It was my luck to hitch-hike from L.A. to Denver a week after RKO released this murder film, *The Hitch-hiker*, about some one-eyed bastard who almost killed two hunters in a station wagon after they picked him up. It took me about six and a half days to make it to Denver that time; you could see the people driving cars and trucks just waiting for you to pull out a .45 automatic and hood one of your perpetually sleepless eyes. One way to combat this, and I did, was to become a fashion plate of the road: spotless, clean-shaven every day, baseball cap perched on the back of my head to make me look cute and like your little brother, obviously collegiate wool sweater with an (unearned) sports letter, scuffed saddle shoes, sometimes my best jacket, and a suitcase with varsity pennant decals stuck all over it which I kept for such occasions. Once or twice I have even gone on the road like the college kids with a great big sign, PACIFIC OCEAN OR BUST or some such stupid item. The thing is, it pays off. Car owners take a look at you and if you are enough of what they would like in their son they figure you won't put a gun behind their ear. Sure, I know it sounds nauseating. But if you want to get from Indianapolis to San Diego, man, you *compromise.*

I digress.

THE FOURTH TIME I SAW HIM it seemed to me that he slowed down a trifle when he saw me, but that may have been my imagination. Because he zanged past at the same high speed and without stopping. That was between Santa Rosa and Tucumcari, New Mexico. No smiles were exchanged. He looked grimmer than usual. By now, I'd had enough fleeting glimpses of him to put his

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shoulders and face, his bust you might say, together in my mind. A highway Identi-Kit. Small, slightly porcine eyes. Short-cropped hair and side-burns, the hair lying flat on the round, burnt-looking head. You felt there would be a hump of muscle or fat at the nape of the thick, low-set neck and that he would have hair on his arms down to the backs of his fingers. He slightly resembled Joe McCarthy, although I grant that may again be my imagination. I put him down for an insurance salesman who had once sold beer city-to-city.

Tension was definitely building up between us. Well, no, not tension perhaps; but a feeling of some kind. At least we were both now sensible that the west coast was probably our mutual destination, that our rates of travelling were approximately the same and that some kind of attitude would have to be worked out. Mine was simple. I mocked. Or rather, I let my thumb do it for me.

It took me two days to get through New Mexico and on the first of those days the yellow Buick passed me up twice. The second time I could see it coming on the clear, hot highway. I neither advanced nor retreated, but leaned forward slightly, pushed the thumb out rather further from my shoulder than was my custom, and waggled it with a kind of churlish entreaty. Ph-f-f-t. No result, as usual. Except that intimacy had been established. One hundred feet up the road I had seen him stamp down hard on the accelerator. He must have been doing 80 when he passed me. I was getting on his nerves more than he on mine. (After all, he was only one of hundreds who did not pick me up. I began to feel sure that was what he was telling himself.) There were 700 miles to go. A lot could be done in that time. Morally speaking, I had him by the throat.

I saw the man in the yellow Buick twice more. Both of us knew we were on our last lap, with only Arizona and California to go. On a Saturday, east of Grants, New Mexico, he sped by me, his podgy jaws locked. I had him hooked, all right.

And then the last time, on a Sunday. (More family cars, less chance of a pick-up.) Outside Kingman, Arizona.

I was standing alone under a blazing hot sun in a hot empty sky. I had been waiting all morning for lifts, receiving none. I had eleven dollars with me, enough for a one-way train fare to my destination, Los Angeles. But I stuck it out. By now you know the reason why. Noon, one, two, three in the afternoon. Hot, dry, tired, the country and me. And then I saw him.

Oh, I knew it was him, even when he was a tiny speck on the horizon of the highway. *Somehow* I knew. The speck grew larger. I straightened my rumpled, sweated clothes. I fixed my eye on him. The approaching, meaningful, anonymous car. Then it was no longer anonymous, it was my yellow Buick. Somewhere inside me I was smiling. I remained absolutely motionless except for my thumb, which slowly swept up in a slow, lazy, arrogant arc, cut off at shoulder level and then brought straight back as though I were stringing a triumphant bow. A thumb for the connoisseur. I was determined not to move. He would either have to run me down in my tracks, pick me up, or do something. He did something.

About a hundred yards down the highway the Buick recognised me. I swear to God he wobbled slightly, slowing down, coming on. Slower, slower. He could see me, and I him. We recognised each other beyond doubt. The auto continued slowing down until it was almost on top of me. I must have been smiling like hell. I bent down to pick up my GI bag when the man leaned out of the window on the passenger side, going at about 5 m.p.h., and said loudly, not shouted, "You dirty sonofabitch."

And then he quickly picked up speed, disappearing down the highway.

I walked back to Kingman and took a train the rest of the way to my destination.

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The Film Cutters

I LEFT ARGUS FILMS, the house in Brooklyn and the railroad flat on 13th Street, and my girl Barbie; I went to work on the docks but was personally thrown off by Albert Anastasia, the Enforcer himself, in a way that is not necessarily relevant to these pages. (In England, I read that the Enforcer got his finally, with a .32 Smith & Wesson and a .38 Colt, in the barbershop of the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City while his bodyguard was across the street having a cup of coffee. Meaning no sacrilege on the dead, I like that bit about the cup of coffee.) I tried hanging around New York but went out to L.A. I was going downhill, not too fast, and with no malice aforethought. I went through more than one job, and in each but the last I was a conscientious and loyal employee. Dug ditches for Con Edison in West Los Angeles and knocked walnuts off trees in Pacoima, served time on the overnight desk of American Wire Service (where I pursued a man-eating leopard which was the figment of a biscuit salesman's vengeful imagination), and drove the morning shift for Yellow Cab. I worked a power saw for a Santa Monica Boulevard ventilator-making company, took part in two stock-car races (placing in neither) and finally went off to look for Indian Bird out near Cache, Oklahoma. He was nowhere around so I went back to L.A., started to write a novel, gave it up, got mixed up in an Easter dawn teen-age riot down at Newport Beach and had to have stitches in my nose and wondered how long I could avoid going to work in a shop, the shop floor of a factory.

I went back to hacking for Yellow Cab, which was my first real experience as a Negro, what Ralph Ellison calls invisible, being looked at, spoken to and seen through. I quit when a buddy, the man who had taught me the ropes, stole my cap and map book out of my locker, and I decided once and for all to find out about the factory. I took a job at a television plant, as a spot welder, only to run out during lunch hour. I kept on running until I hit Skid Row, but now, as it never did before, it terrified me. So I took another job sitting alongside seven other misfits cleaning 16-mm. film.

IT WAS THE LAST JOB I was to have before swinging aboard Hollywood. The building in which we worked (in the basement) was a dazzling white concrete three-tier split-level ultra-modernistic copy of a short, jagged dream of a man. It was situated, slanted downhill, on a sunnily blistering corner at the very top of Sunset Strip, just before the green belt leading to Bel Air and my old university begins.

A single business occupied these premises. The men who conducted the business ate lunch every day at La Rue's, two blocks down the boulevard, and arrived for work at 10.30 a.m. in new Oldsmobiles and Chryslers and wore spun-shantung suits and called each other "honey" and "doll," although they chewed cigars. Sometimes they brought their wives to the office. Office space took up all but the basement portion of the building, which is where we worked, the helots.

We had a single workroom which was about half the size of the company president's office, although it was up to us to keep up the mechanical end of the business. We, the eight of us, sat on high metal stools, four facing four, most of us not yet thirty years old, in a neon-lit vault kept at a deliberately cool, exceptionally dry temperature which gave to our sun-thickened voices a lunging, crackling quality. We all had the same job. To sit between two spools, technically known as re-winds, holding the left hand at the top of one spool to act as a brake while rotating, for more or less eight hours a day (plus overtime) the right hand in a clockwise direction, which kept in motion a continuous and moving band of film we were supposed to let pass through our left hand (when it was not acting as a brake) holding a cotton rag soaked in methylethylene or similar cleaning fluid.

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The film we worked on was 16-mm. prints of old, not to say ancient pictures which the Hollywood studios had sold to provincial television stations. The building on top of us was engaged in syndicating and distributing these prints. None of us really knew how the business worked, except that our labours were responsible for something in the vicinity of thirty million citizens west of the Rocky Mountains devoting a major portion of their evening hours to the film we were allegedly cleaning.

The work was comfortable, intolerably dull and very badly paid. Our employer, a portly and Viennese gentleman, gave it to us to understand that the low wages were commensurate with our inabilities to rise above such jobs as he offered us. He had an inactive, unaggressive contempt for us as native-born Americans who had failed to improve ourselves while he, a victim of Hitler, was on the way up. For some reason six of the eight of us in the basement seemed to approve, and even respect this man. The exception, besides myself, was a shambles of a boy named Hans Landau.

HANS was a distant cousin of Antonia Landau's, of Argus Records in New York, although he had never met her. (The Landaus were divided into *haute bourgeoisie* and literary-theatrical talent, the bulk of the latter having removed themselves to the west coast almost at the moment of debarking upon the American shores from warring Europe.) Hans's father was a novelist and physician; Hans's mother, a dress-designer for Hollywood stars, was even better known than the father. Hans was the black sheep of an only-son family.

Hans and I had often seen each other here and there in Los Angeles but we did not get to know one another until it was our fate to sit opposite on the 16-mm. re-winds. The two of us were somewhat set apart from the others: I had had "education" and Hans gave the impression. But the democracy of the miserable is a rigid, spiteful establishment, and we were committed to it, Hans and I. Although he was blood-related to the company president, it did not—until the moment of strike—occur to either of us that he should use the relationship for, say, exemption from the silly, humiliating bullying of our foreman, an eighteen-year-old boy named Elkin. We detested Elkin—so clean-shaven, well-built, rosy-cheeked. He was bright but not intelligent, and to all our quarrelsome complaints—about the wages, the twenty-minute lunch break, the grouching over his persistent efforts to make our work less slipshod (which it was)—he would say sneeringly, Why don't you leave? Quit. You don't have to stay.

He was right, of course, much righter than he knew, in taunting us this way. To Elkin, dodging the draft and marrying the daughter of one of the president's assistants upstairs, marrying in other words into the business, it seemed a simple enough matter. Why *didn't* we leave? But none of us could. We had all wanted this job because it called upon so little of each of us. And for that reason, a terrible reason, we could not quit it. Who else would hire us? We hated ourselves, and each other, for it. But there it was. We were cowards in a coward's job. Elkin was ambitious and worked hard and I don't think I have ever met anyone who humiliated me, by the very act of personal contact, the way Elkin did. He was always looking at me in a kind of amazed, amused way. Also I was afraid, slightly, physically afraid of Elkin. He played football for L.A. High School and was tremendously strong despite a lithe, fairly slender build. He was cunning enough to sense that I was afraid, and that if a challenge came it would come from me, and that therefore he could bully us with impunity. It's not easy to describe what I mean by bullying. There was the usual ragging, and nagging about schedules, and picking and carping, but none of us minded that too much. Foremen are foremen, even if they are only eighteen. No, it was what I tried to touch on before. His brutishness about reminding us, each in a way vulnerable to us as individuals, that we were hopeless failures while all around us lay, literally glittering in the sun, evi-

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dence of success and affluence which he, Elkin, would one day, climbing above us, attain. In the mornings, for example, he would always be in the re-wind room ahead of us, ready to cry out, Good morning, you bums. What Elkin did not know, I believe, is that we were, in some large sense, bums. At least we all felt it. It was like Skid Row again. As we sat all day, monotonously rotating our arms, the long rolls of film slithering and wavering through the rags in our fingers and sending out wave upon wave of cleaning fluid odours, a pall of numb, almost hypnotic hopelessness used to fall on us, until by the end of the day we hated each other. We never saw each other after work. It was unthinkable.

So THERE WERE Hans and myself; and next to me sat Theodore, the stoolpigeon. Theodore was stunted, crippled down one side of his body by a childhood paralytic stroke which had whittled him down to under size and caused him to drag both one foot and certain parts of speech; with bright almond-shaped eyes and a mis-shapen, pear-shaped head, with tremendous b.o. and endowed, through his stupidity, with a certain curious thrusting intelligence which would swarm upon you at the most unexpected times. A crypto moron, a physical moron three-quarters of the time, he possessed a certain insight into the lives of those he worked among. With our hearts and souls we despised Theodore. He was the *lumpen*, the Van Der Lubbe of our little work force, someone who we felt in our hearts should have died at birth. He jeered constantly at Hans, who also was lame.

Across from Theodore sat Widdick, a handsome, almost dandyish young man who was just, he assured us, "passing through." (That's what they always tell you on the Row, and your heart sings when you see them stop and stay.) Widdick kept his own counsel, did his work quietly (and was the most careless of the lot) and didn't seem outwardly defeated. It wasn't until the strike that he announced to all of us that he had been a plant security guard and had pistol-whipped a thief, or would-be thief, aged thirteen, and had been sacked in disgrace. He ended by telling us, in a neutral tone, I sometimes hit small kids.

NEXT to Theodore sat Sidney, a smiling, wincing, movie-magazine devouring piece of plump, over-ripe fruit. Sidney was all right; he had been, literally, born that way. A few less jogs of his old man's torso and Sidney would have come out as a girl very likely. He would have made a fat, homely girl but a better one than the boy he was. Sidney was very intelligent. But he had, as they say, confused values. He was a walking, talking, waddling compendium of mass culture. Age fifty, not a year less, with the clear flesh of a young Etonian. He studied Hedda Hopper's column as though it were an apostolic epistle which he constantly carried with him and often stopped work to read silently. He knew, always knew, which pictures were in production and who was starring in them. You would be surprised at how irritating a habit this is, especially when the man in question does not know it is irritating. The thing about Sidney was, he took the plots of movies *seriously*. Sometimes when I was exasperated beyond politeness, I would shout, Sidney, I used to make up those plots. Then I would describe to Sidney why a film is made, precisely who wrote the story and how. But even though I would often do this with all the quiet persuasiveness at my command, and even though he lived directly across the street from RKO Studios, Sidney sustained a deep, sure identification with the hideous *sincérité* of movie plots. To everything I said, Sidney simply smiled cordially and replied, Now that *is* fascinating. No, Sidney, I would say, it's terrible, don't you see how terrible it is. And he would smile that serene, Bible-reading smile of his, and say, with a kind of amiable ruefulness. It's so ingenious. Sidney.

Opposite him worked the Actor. One-eyed Tammany Jones. It was not his real name, of course. With his agent's approval he had chosen Tammany. But not even his agent knew he had only one good eye: no eye patch,

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and full movement. When I told him the derivation of his *nom-de-travail* he, like Sidney, said, Now that's pretty interesting, isn't it? He spoke with a faint lisp and had broad shoulders and was letting his sideburns grow in the hope he could land one of the roles going in the TV westerns which were being shot all over town. Tammany made it clear to us that he too was only passing through, and would alternate periods of fraternising and snobbishness. The best thing about Tammany was the way he stood up to Elkin.

ELKIN, WHEN HE DID RE-WIND WORK, sat at the end of the work table across from Werner Zampi. Now Zampi had a curious story. After comparing notes, Hans Landau and I decided that he was, or had been, a Fascist. Zampi was a small, sallow, and obsequious man, a north Tyrolese who had, he told us, been a film editor with the Italian Army. He had been a p.o.w. at Fort Sheridan, in Illinois, repatriated to the Tyrol and had then come back through marrying a half-Jewish girl of American citizenship. Sometimes the boys, in a joking manner, would try to get out of Zampi his attitudes to Mussolini and Hitler, but he would always spread out his hands and say, Aheye, leave that to the politicians, I am no politician. Zampi was a bitter little man, a fully qualified editor to whom the Hollywood union would not permit entry. He had, however, discovered that by kicking back part of his present and future salary to a certain union official he would be permitted a job, and he was, while working with us, in the process of negotiating such a transaction. It goes without saying that this, his first and second occupational experiences in America, confirmed a certain image in his mind, and Hans and I were always expecting him to burst out one day with, Hitler was not *all* bad.

From Hans, Zampi stayed strictly away. The first day on the job, Hans told me, as soon as he had learned Zampi was gentile, Tyrolean, and ex-Blackshirt, he had gone up to him in the basement toilet and bluntly explained that he, Hans, was a Jew, and had given him orders not to refer to it. Although it was a little difficult seeing Hans giving anyone orders, I believed this. Hans was, considering the rest of us down in the basement bent over our re-winds, a moral titan.

Whether Hans had been born this way, or had suffered a childhood brain injury, was something his father and mother had never adequately explained to him. The official story was the usual one of falling on his head from the crib, but Hans said that his parents told this version too perfunctorily for his comfort. According to outward physical appearances Hans was all right, just so long as he stood still. He was large, bulky, and plangently bald, with a sad, elephantine drooping face and eyes that are usually described as liquid. But when he got moving he was all a shambles. His speech was trudging and slightly slurred, and the only way he knew to point a finger was to start out by moving both arms in rough cancelling-out motions, pyramidally, until he got the effect he wanted. If you happened to find yourself standing anywhere except directly in front of Hans, and suddenly you said, Hans! he would throw himself together in a kind of unco-ordinated, convulsive fit in order to locate, alternately cringing and craning his body, where you were. He wrote poetry and short stories and was, he knew, like myself, a failure in life.

MOST OF THE DAY we sat, all of us, hunched over our re-winds without a word to each other except for the impolite grunts and short gestures needed when we required the film cement or razor blade. This silence was broken only when one of us, usually unprompted, would suddenly blurt out a story of an insignificant incident which had occurred during the previous day. Invariably, nobody else picked up the thread, except for a single round of comments around the table, whence a dull, whirring silence would once again descend. This silence, which we shared, had a texture all of its own. It was malign, inbred, spiteful. Occasionally, someone would suddenly

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stop his re-wind in mid-film and slide off the stool, cursing as though with a mouth full of ashes. Such occasions caused no stir of surprise among us: our turn to do the same would come, or had just come. We loathed the easiness of our work, our stations, and each other. All that is, except Hans and me.

I loved Hans. I was the George to his Lenny. No, that is unfair and not correct. Hans looked mentally deficient and was not. In point of fact, he was sensitive, decent, and the legitimate heir to a far-ranging culture, that of the Hollywood Viennese. I think now, he was mixed up. Literally, mixed up. Not all the parts of him had ever come together into a blend. He was different from the rest of us in having never suffered a disintegration; he had never been enough integrated for that. His parts, his senses, were all jumbled, and none of them was excellent. Poor eyesight, bad co-ordination, a trifle deaf, even his senses of touch and smell were not normal. Old Hans, he definitely was under par all right. Nobody in the re-wind room bullied him, that was the trouble. Even Elkin, our eighteen-year-old foreman, treated Hans with a form of tenderness. I felt like mashing Elkin for his attitude. I knew it humiliated Hans, who more than anything else wanted to be treated normally. The hell of it was, there was this mechanism in Hans which prevented him most times from seeing when people were treating him specially, there was a streak of horrifying, slow thinking in him. But I knew he had found out Elkin (whose motives, in this instance, were high).

HANS AND I played a special game, over the re-winds, which nobody but us knew about. At first we used to talk together. Formal seminars. To make the time pass faster. One week we held a seminar in *"Morality, Retrograde and Progressive, in the Faerie Queen."* (Both Hans and I had done work on Spenser.) For a few days we discussed *"The Dissemination and Transfiguration of Uni-Theism from the Early Greek Sects to the Middle Ages,"* or *"Influences of Rural Ideology on Early Trade Union Organisations."* One day we almost got sick laughing over *"Evidences of Anal-Retentive Symbols and Artifacts in Tennyson, Middle Period."* The reaction of the other boys was more or less what you would expect. For a while they paid us no attention. Then they got sore. Theodore, the fink, brought a portable radio when the World Series began and stuck it on the wall shelf which was just above where Hans and I sat. When the World Series was over, somehow Hans and I didn't have the stomach to go back to our seminars. We relapsed into the sullen mutual silence. And then, beautifully, we stumbled on this idea, this plan, this grand design. In all modesty, I must put it down here that the idea originally came to me—but also, had it not been for Hans' initial reaction, his burst of spontaneous encouragement, the world today would be a poorer place indeed.

ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN DAYS AFTER the World Series, as we were working monotonously away, I was suddenly stricken with a blinding, magnificent sense of reality. Perhaps, in later history books, this moment will be likened to the maid Joan's first vision or St. Paul's trauma. Be that as it may, it struck me that this material which was running through my ethyl-soaked hands, at the rate of three feet per second (timed, naturally, by Elkin), was motion picture film. On the film were prospects, vistas, and perspectives which, when projected by a machine into a cathode ray tube and electronically distributed to American homes, created a series of mounting images which formed one leg of that monster table, the mass media. What better way to devote one's spare (and more than spare, *working*) hours than to lead the way in sabotaging the media? Snip.

So this one afternoon, I suddenly stopped my re-wind and picked up the piece of film. I sabotaged it. The method was simplicity itself. Part of our job was to check the film for breaks or chips in the sprocket holes. If we came across a break we stopped the re-winds, snipped half a frame from either side of the defect, cemented the film together and rolled

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on. A missing frame, or even two, possibly three (depending upon the action) is rarely detected by the audience. It so happened that many of the prints going through our hands were in old and dilapidated condition. They should have been replaced by new prints. The management, of course and however, wished to squeeze the very last ounce of profit they could from these old prints, even if their scratches and breaks did irritate a mass audience. My own feeling was that if management wished to take the risks, I would be happy to oblige by supplying them. Snip.

So I HELD the strip of film in my hand for some time, savouring an historical moment. Hans but nobody else stopped his work to watch. He smiled faintly at me, in the way he had. I gazed almost affectionately at the slightly torn sprocket hole in the piece of film I was holding. I then cut through the film with my razor blade, took up two feet of film, cut through again, cemented the ends, dropped the two feet of amputated film into a trash bin at my side, and rolled on. Hans stared at me. I smiled at him. A moment later I repeated this procedure, removing from the film another twenty-four inches of action and sound. The picture was called *Farewell, Dear Murderer.* All told, I took out seven or eight stretches of film story. I knew that many television stations never took the trouble to screen the films they bought, and the ecstasy of my vision of the reaction of the Late-Late-Viewers as they bumped and jolted through a more than normally incomprehensible story almost brought tears of joy to my eyes. To you, out there, this may sound vicious, or hostile, childish even. Such is the fate that awaits all great seminal actions of a revolutionary character. Snip, snip.

I ripped whole sections of film out of the spools all that day. Working with friends of Arturo Mishkin at Argus Records in New York I had acquired the knack of "reading" film by just holding it up to the light and using the individual frames like letters of the alphabet. I did this now. From day to day, I refined my method from indiscriminate sabotage to calculated torture. I would "read" the film until I came to the climactic scene of a sequence—the cowboy dashing to the rescue of the lady, the revelation by the master detective of the criminal, the seduction which the plot had been leading up to—and then, simply, remove it. The fact that I was doing this veritably under Elkin's nose pleased me. You may say, as you read this, lugubriously, such is the state to which he was humbled. Yes, probably.

But all I can remember is a singing heart. From that first day onward my job took on meaning.

Howard Griffin : The Gradient

Where was it—Corinth, Thivai?—
we'd been hitching and were caught
without a ride upon the dusty slope;
a bent shepherd
came with a clay jar of
water—the shape
of his smile, of the jug
thousands of years old.

Now we do not write.
More than ever I think of changelessness,
of the sea, of abstract shapes.
—The Greeks use the word *herete* to mean two things.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Germany and the West

A Reply to Sebastian Haffner — By SIR WILLIAM HAYTER

MR. HAFFNER'S article strikes me as odd. He seems to argue from an unverified hypothesis (that the Western Allies intend to recognise the East German Government) to an unwarranted conclusion (that this will result in a surrender of all Germany to the Soviet Union).

Let us begin at the beginning. Mr. Haffner believes that West Germany joined NATO out of pure altruism, almost entirely as a favour to the West. He also believes that they joined in return for a Western promise to support German reunification by diplomatic means. These statements cannot both be correct and in my opinion neither of them is.

Governments seldom act out of pure altruism, in order to oblige other Governments, and I do not believe that the West German Government's decision to join NATO was any exception to this rule. But I also do not believe that West Germany would have joined for anything so very insubstantial as a Western promise of diplomatic support for German re-unification, and in fact she had two very good reasons for joining, both of which are still valid.

The first of these was the policy of reconciliation with and integration into Western Europe. This policy was of course designed to end for ever the age-old friction between France and Germany. It seems, so far, to have succeeded. Mr. Haffner entirely ignores the process of West European integration. But it is surely a central reality of post-war German policy.

Germany's second reason for joining NATO was obviously to obtain protection against Soviet attack. Mr. Haffner implies that it is West Germany which is now doing all the protecting and running all the risks. Look again, Mr. Haffner.

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However, even if we accept that Mr. Haffner might be wrong about Germany's motives for joining the Western Alliance, the fact remains that there is a Western promise to support German reunification diplomatically. Here two questions arise. Is this promise in danger of being broken? And if it were broken or watered down, what would the consequences be for West Germany? When Mr. Haffner wrote this article, and as I write these comments on it, there is no real reason to suppose that there is any intention by any of the Western Governments to recognise the East German Government. In my opinion it would be as absurd to expect them to do so as to expect the Soviet Government to recognise Chiang Kai-shek. Obviously they may be obliged to have as much semi-official intercourse with the East German authorities as the West Germans have long had (they have always been much more free and easy over this than the other Western Governments). But would and should such contacts have the disastrous consequences that Mr. Haffner foresees?

I HAVE OF COURSE no inside knowledge of the intentions of the three Western Governments, and for all I know they may intend to go further than I myself would think necessary or sensible in the direction of recognising the East German authorities as a Government. But even if they did, would the West Germans, whom Mr. Haffner represents sometimes as models of patience and sense and elsewhere, when the argument requires it, as prone to hysteria, be thereby justified in committing political suicide in the arms of Mr. Khrushchev? Recognising the East German Government would in no way preclude the Allies from diplomatic efforts to achieve German reunification. The existing split in Germany was in effect acknowledged when the Allies recognised the *West* German Government, and official recognition of the East German Government would not change this (though, as I say, I should deplore it on other grounds). If the West Germans are as prudent and clear-headed as Mr. Haffner

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suggests in part of his article they would surely see that it would still be possible, after such recognition, to work diplomatically for German reunification. They would also probably notice that such diplomatic work is not likely to be more productive in the future than in the past. Why? Because it suits Mr. Khrushchev to keep Germany divided, and he has the means to achieve this. It suits him to keep it divided because he can control his little bit through his stooges, and he knows well enough that a united Germany, united on any terms which the Western Allies or, one hopes *pace* Mr. Haffner, Western Germany would accept, would be unitedly hostile to him.

What I miss most in Mr. Haffner's article is any positive programme. He tells us what we should not do, namely recognise East Germany, and I agree with this, though for different reasons. What he fails to tell us is what he would like us to do. My own belief is that we cannot hope to do more than hold on, but Mr. Haffner seems to think this is not enough. Then what? And how?

John Mander:

No one has done more in recent years to explain the Germans to the English (and, let it be said, the English to the Germans) than Sebastian Haffner. From his lonely outpost in beleaguered Berlin, Mr. Haffner informed us week by week of what West Germans and West Berliners were thinking. There was something heroic in the attempt. For the general public had never been less interested in what the Germans were thinking. Add to which Mr. Haffner was writing for a left-wing audience. And the British Left had no desire to be informed about the Germans; it knew. Germans are Germans: in Leipzig, Düsseldorf, West Berlin, or Pembrokeshire. Had not its prophets (good Socialists and humanists all) pronounced that Germans could never change their nature? Had not all those who should have known (should have known better, one might retort) annually predicted a return to the *Furor Teutonicus*? No wonder Mr. Haffner's frankness won him a sour reputation on the further Left, who came to regard him as Adenauer's man, the most frigid (though this was never easy to reconcile with such personal warmth and charm) of Cold Warriors. One unfortunate consequence of Mr. Haffner's provocative piece in your last issue may be that this view will become generally accepted.

Let me make my own position plain. I think Sebastian Haffner has talked more sense about Germany, and Germans in East and West, than almost any other British commentator. He has contributed generously to the sanity of nations. Of the charges the Left has brought against him in the past, I would admit only that he has, in his treatment of Adenauer, not always approached that ancient cynic with the cynicism he demands. The Left's charges now are predictable: it will be said that he has dropped the mask, and spoken out in the authentic tones of West German intransigence. I do not believe this to be true. Partly because I cannot believe in Mr. Haffner's identification (apparent in his article) with such an attitude. But more because I do not believe that this attitude is representative of West German opinion. I suspect Mr. Haffner of being more West German than the West Germans.

But let us be clear about it. The language Mr. Haffner uses suggests not only intimate rapport with what the Germans are thinking, it has a representative, an almost "official" (*offiziös*, perhaps Germans would say) ring to it. *"From the German point of view,"* writes Mr. Haffner of the Western commitment to further reunification in the Paris Treaties, "these clauses are the purpose and justification of the alliance with the West. Without them, the alliance would become, *from the national German point of view*, meaningless and indeed suicidal" [my italics]. The decision to sign that treaty, taken after "the biggest national debate and crisis of conscience the country went through since the years 1930–33," Mr. Haffner considers "almost a miracle." Stalin's offer of German unity (in his note of March 10th, 1952) was finally rejected by the Germans only "after much discussion and bitter heart-searching." "Not all the reasons were . . . selfless," writes Mr. Haffner, but "the German decision was nevertheless overwhelmingly an act of magnanimity. . . . The Germans knew they were doing the West an immense favour: they were saving Nato. . . ." Doubters remain, but "the majority of German public opinion has nevertheless supported the Western option—though perhaps more with the head than the heart." Since that time, "the Germans . . . have been as

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good as gold . . . they have been loyal, modest, tactful, dutiful, patient. . . ."

Ridiculous? No. Despite British press reporting and comment of almost unrelieved malevolence, the West Germans have been all of that. German loyalty to NATO and the Western alliance is indeed touching. Of which other major European NATO power can it be said that it has been "loyal, modest, tactful, or dutiful?" France, under de Gaulle? Britain, after Suez and Aldermaston, with our four NATO divisions in Germany permanently understrength? What is important, as anyone who has lived in Germany will confirm, is that the West Germans have acquired a sense of solidarity with the West which goes far beyond mere political alliance. Ironical proof of this is the utter lack of embarrassment with which West Germans now speak of "Munich." Clearly, West Germans now identify themselves *without conscious reflection* with the "Western position," blaming us (the West) for not having been tough with them (the Nazi-Germans), and implying that we (the West, including the Adenauer-Germans) ought to be tougher with them (the East) as a result. A comical reversal of roles, perhaps, but one from which I personally draw much comfort.

And it is precisely because I agree with Mr. Haffner's estimate of West German loyalty to the West, that I disagree both with his prognosis, and with his account of the West German crisis of conscience that preceded the Paris treaties. According to Mr. Haffner, the remarkable tact, patience, and modesty the West Germans have shown since 1954 is the *consequence* of that treaty, and of the guarantees the West then gave that it would make "German national interests" its own. Should the West recognise a second German state, he says, the offence to German national interests would be such that the Germans might be permanently disaffected, ultimately seceding from the Western alliance. The "Western option" which the West Germans have always only supported "with the head rather than the heart" might be rejected in favour of a suitably generous Eastern offer (at the expense of Ulbricht, and of Gomulka) of a reunited Germany with the frontiers of 1937.

CERTAINLY, THIS IS "SPECULATION." But it is speculation which makes the West Germans appear both better (more "magnanimous") and worse (more Machiavellian) than they really are. Where I take issue with Mr. Haffner is not in his estimate of the degree of West German loyalty, but in his estimate of its nature. For the German decision to join the West to be called magnanimous, it must be shown that the "Russian option," under which national unity could have been had "for the asking," was a real possibility. Mr. Haffner writes as if this were so. The German rejection of Stalin's offer was "almost a miracle." Of course, the Social Democrat and Free Democrat opposition in West Germany has often *behaved* as if the "Russian option" were real (though the new Brandt-Wehner line in the SPD would seem to preclude this). But the German Government, and the mass of the German people, have consistently and vigorously rejected it. They have rejected it because they fear Communism above all things, and know that, since West Germany's very strength precludes "an Austrian solution," only a full alliance with the West can contain Soviet power. I am speaking here of the West German electorate. The East Germans thought differently, but they had no votes. The people of West Germany are neither selfish nor magnanimous; they vote for their own interests, to hold what they have (not for "German national interests"). It is true that many admirable people, not least on the German Left, were (and are) willing to brave the perils of neutralism. One may respect their stand (especially since alignment with the West meant rearmament and restoration of *laissez-faire* capitalism), and still find their attitude mistaken, perhaps even disastrous. But what is certain is that at no time were the German people willing to follow their lead. Refusing to do so, they showed more democratic common sense than they are usually credited with.

The West German electorate may have chosen its Western alignment "with the head rather than the heart" (not at all a bad thing, one would have thought, bearing recent German history in mind). But Mr. Haffner attributes to the West Germans political attitudes far more cold-blooded and Machiavellian than any they have in fact ever shown (such attributions have until now been a prerogative of the Germanophobe Left). Is it true that the clauses committing the West to German reunification were "from the German point of view . . . the purpose and justification of the alliance with the West"? Were there not quite other, overriding interests—of military security and political stability—that required the strongest possible alignment with the West, even if the West had not been ready to give such guarantees as to "German national interests"? Is it true that West German loyalty is based, essentially, on a *realpolitische* calculation: that an alliance with the West was expedient, in terms of national political power, since "their own potential would render the Western camp overwhelmingly strong in the long run"? I do not think this accurately describes the nature of German

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loyalty to the West, which I take to have a far more solid moral, political, social, and even psychological base than, for the purposes of his present argument, does Mr. Haffner. For this reason I cannot believe that the West Germans could pursue the kind of Machiavellian *"Rapallopolitik"* that Mr. Haffner has sketched out for them.

The magnanimity and Machiavellianism would seem contradictory; but Mr. Haffner's attribution of them to the West Germans serves, I suggest, a definite end: to establish and, as I think, to exaggerate the element of free choice in the West German acceptance of the "Western option." For, clearly, the stronger the element of genuine moral renunciation in the German decision, the stronger the moral obligation of the West. I take Mr. Haffner's essay to be in effect a direct appeal to the British to consider the *moral* implications of the political and military commitments they entered into in 1954. As such, it deserves to be taken very seriously indeed. Particularly since the element of *moral* obligation has been, as Mr. Haffner rightly says, largely ignored by commentators in the British press.

YET BY EXAGGERATING the virtue of the West German decision Mr. Haffner weakens, I feel, the impact, and perhaps the cogency, of his appeal. After all, the quick, rude retort to Mr. Haffner would be to say, of the West Germans before 1954, that beggars can't be choosers. The West Germans owed their economic recovery and political rehabilitation from total defeat (which, let us repeat, they owed only to themselves) entirely to the efforts of the Western powers. Self-interest dictated to West Germany that they should continue to receive these benefits. To shift the argument to the moral plane: the West Germans would seem to have every reason to be grateful to the Western powers. These same powers, which a German régime had conspired to destroy, had liberated the West Germans from the tyranny of that régime, while introducing the Germans to the benefits of democracy, and were prepared to defend West Germany against the new tyranny from the East. In exchange, they asked for a West German political and military commitment to the West. The notion that the Western powers shouldered at the same time a *moral* obligation to defend more remote German interests (such as the official claim to the borders of 1937, or the semi-official claim to the Sudetenland, but also including the indefinite non-recognition of the status quo in Eastern Germany) is one that most British people would, with some justice, repudiate. They might retort—and we have heard this argument used by West Germans whose judgment we respect—that some moral obligation to pay for the consequences of Herr Hitler rests on the Germans themselves. The division of Germany could well be that price.

THAT IT IS a very terrible price, we ought to admit. And it would be quite wrong to use the moral obloquy of Germany's past to cancel our own moral obligation to her in the present: that would be tantamount to moral outlawry. We should be denying in advance that any agreement with Germans was worth the paper it was written on—hardly an expedient attitude on our part, and certainly a morally objectionable one. But if a British *moral* obligation to assist the West Germans exists, as I agree with Mr. Haffner that it does, its scope should be more exactly defined. Thus: does an obligation exist to relieve the lot of the East Germans? No one who has read of the recent doings of Herr Ulbricht's thugs could deny that, on general grounds of humanity, such an obligation does exist (though it is not at all clear how we can translate our sympathy into useful action). But a similar obligation, on general grounds of humanity, exists towards the Poles and Czechs. In their case, it is combined with specific historical obligations: towards the Poles, on whose behalf we went to war against Germany, and at whose incorporation into Stalin's empire we connived; towards the Czechs, whose Western affections were so weakly returned in 1938 and 1948. It may be more expedient to support *Sudetendeutsche* claims to a *Recht auf Heimat*, or the return of the "lost territories"—though one may have strong doubts even as to their expediency. But it is hard to see that we have a moral obligation to do these things. Our moral obligation, I suggest, consists in conserving the political freedom and economic well-being: first, of the West Germans, whose government signed the Paris Treaties; second, of the West Berliners. Thirdly, we should do what we can to alleviate the lot of the East Germans—though how much we can do the next weeks will show.

Since Mr. Haffner doubts whether the British people are willing to accept the larger, he may well doubt whether they will accept the lesser, obligation. He is surely right in associating British indifference to those moral obligations clearly entered into with the popular British sport of German-baiting. The reasons for this persistent and malignant anti-Germanism—they are not excuses: for racialist propaganda there are none—seem to me fairly clear. If one accepts that the British popular mood, at least since 1951, has been essentially backward-looking, fixated on a lost Imperial past, and frozen in the heroic postures of 1940, anti-Germanism is

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merely that mood's logical extension. If 1940 had indeed been Britain's finest hour, the Germans could have been forgiven. It is because we know that 1940 was not a true victory, but a deferment of the real conflict, that we find it hard to forgive. We cling to the illusion that 1940 revealed Britain's strength; in fact it revealed our weakness, our dependence on the power of others, even for self-defence. Since we have not yet come to terms with our dependence, the illusory triumph of 1940 is important to us. After 1945, the Germans had few illusions about their position in the world. We had many, and anti-Germanism will continue as long as we lack the courage to shed them.

I AM ARGUING, in effect, that it is British attitudes to Germany that are a little neurotic, a little hysterical—not German attitudes to Britain. A striking proof of this was the press reaction to the Castlemartin affair. There was Mr. Donald Edgar, of the *Evening Standard*, who argued that the sending of German troops to Britain must be a tremendous fillip for West German prestige, that Dr. Adenauer would find it very useful during the election. This was not how West Germans saw it. The ratio of press coverage in England and in Germany must have been something like 10:1. This suggests that we are—for all our feigned indifference to things German—considerably more obsessed by the Germans than they are by us. To the Germans the Pembrokeshire manœuvres were *selbstverständlich*: the British, their allies in NATO, who made use of training facilities on German soil, had invited them to share similar facilities on British soil. Last year, manœuvres of the same kind in Northern France had scarcely raised comment in the French press. The British reaction suggested, not so much anti-German feeling, as unawareness that an alliance between the two countries existed.

Will this change? I think it may. Already there is evidence that the old British contempt for European attitudes is being transformed into reluctant admiration. The professionalism, which the British have traditionally despised in the Germans, is now well spoken of—as it should be, since it is a main source of German industrial superiority. The hard work, *gründlichkeit*, and sheer dogged application of the Germans now seem less ridiculous. There are signs that younger people here are now capable (as they are in France) of looking at West German success without resentment, rather with respect and a tough determination to emulate. This is bitter medicine, certainly—not less bitter than the pills which any East-West agreement is certain to have in store for the German people. But it is at least possible that the present crisis may create, not a new and disastrous estrangement between Britain and Germany, as Mr. Haffner darkly predicts, but the basis for a new *rapprochement*. Certainly, if we survive the present crisis, our illusions will not.

F. R. Allemann:

MR. HAFFNER'S article has the merit of raising some important points which, unhappily, have been all too easily neglected (if not completely forgotten) by far too many British and American partisans of "a Berlin compromise." In two respects, at least, I think he is utterly right against prevailing press opinion:

1. By putting pressure on the Western powers Mr. Khrushchev is not just following a defensive purpose. He does not think exclusively in terms of consolidating the *status quo* in Central Europe, of making the division of Germany more watertight, or of sheltering Stalin's conquests against the winds of change. His strategy is not simply designed to prop up the Communist régime in Eastern Germany which (before August 13th) was visibly crumbling before our eyes; nor are his recent exercises in brinkmanship primarily motivated by the mere wish to impose a Berlin settlement which would legitimise the annexation of East Berlin to the German Democratic Republic, while giving the Soviets a share in the decision on the future of Berlin's Western Sectors and reducing Western responsibility there in exchange for a "Free City" arrangement. His real aim—and in this I agree with Mr. Haffner's analysis—is rather to break up NATO, to drive a wedge between Bonn and its French and Anglo-Saxon partners, and thus to wreck the force which has barred a Russian advance on the European continent ever since 1948.

2. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that the freedom of Berlin could be purchased by recognising the *DDR* and by thus agreeing to a permanent division of Germany. This much-advertised "solution" might, perhaps, gain a certain respite for the people of Berlin until the moment the Kremlin mounts the next crisis; but such a bargain would risk the weakening

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Freedom in Berlin . . .

The following statement has been presented to Mayor Willy Brandt in Berlin by Desmond Donnelly, M.P., heading a small delegation from the 116 signatories listed below; it is being sent this week to the representatives of the Permanent Missions of the United Nations, at present to the members to the United Nations meeting in Berlin.

In 1939 a fanatical dictator in the Nazi capital led Germany into world war, ultimately with over fifty nations in both hemispheres. Six years later, when he was dead in Berlin, men and women everywhere hoped that a peaceful world would emerge. Yet no peace was achieved in the ruins of Berlin. The city was divided between the Eastern and Western conquerors. Two different régimes have grown up in Germany, a country which aspires to reunification.

We, the undersigned, believe that none of us can be indifferent about what happens in and to and over Berlin. We are all involved. We have all, at one time or another, been engaged and committed. It can only be a source of the deepest sadness to us that this city, eager for nothing more than the opportunity to work out its everyday affairs and destiny in elementary freedom, should again be the subject of threats and international crisis.

It is proper and inevitable that not only Europeans and Americans have become alarmed, but the entire international community. For some the diplomatic and legal questions at issue may appear very complicated. For others the political and military policies being presented by the various powers may be controversial. But on one thing all men everywhere—inside and outside the United Nations—should unite: on the passionate, if troubled, concern for the future of freedom in Berlin.

Two million of its citizens, inhabiting the so-called Western sectors, live at present in liberty. Over the past fifteen years a peaceful and progressive way of life has clearly emerged. They have freely elected their mayors and their parliamentary representatives, and have argued out their political and civic issues in the pages of a free press representing many different points of view. They send their children to free schools and a Free University, and to churches of their own choosing. They have established an orderly community under a Rule of Law, where no citizen need fear arbitrary arrest and every refugee, whether from persecution or from hunger, may find asylum. Time and again they have indicated their overwhelming support of this free and democratic way of life, holding fast to the principle of the self-determination of peoples (a principle which so many of the rulers of the day, from Lenin and Woodrow Wilson to Nehru and Nkrumah and even Khrushchev, have on occasion advocated).

Our concern now is for freedom in Berlin. In these days of apparent confusion and soul-searching, we want to affirm our whole-hearted support for the people of free Berlin, for their civil liberties and democratic institutions, for their struggle to remain unmolested by aggressive power-politics and illiberal rearrangements.

Freedom in Berlin must not be betrayed; this would be betraying not only honour and principle but the delicate basis of European security. Freedom in Berlin must be defended and supported, for it is the very symbol of the struggle of peoples everywhere to live their own lives without fear and foreign interference. Free Berlin is a universal frontier of peace and liberty. We extend our heartfelt greetings to its citizens.

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. . . 116 Signatories

Lord Altrincham
Lord Attlee
W. H. Auden
Alice Bacon, M.P.
Honor Balfour
Max Beloff
William Blyton, M.P.
Mark Bonham Carter
Lady Violet Bonham Carter
Jennifer Bourdillon
Andrew Boyd
Elizabeth M. Braddock, M.P.
D. W. Brogan
George Brown, M.P.
Alastair Buchan
Alan Bullock
G. R. Chetwynd, M.P.
Randolph Churchill
Colin Clark
Cyril Connolly
William Connor
Robert Conquest
Edward Crankshaw
Aidan Crawley
C. A. R. Crosland, M.P.
Brian Crozier
Sir Henry Dale
C. D. Darlington
Alan Day
Robin Day
Geoffrey De Freitas, M.P.
Sefton Delmer
Desmond Donnelly, M.P.
T. S. Eliot
Charles Fenby
Constantine FitzGibbon
Dingle Foot, M.P.
Lindley Fraser
T. R. Fyvel
Sir John Gielgud
Ian Gilmour
Jo Grimond, M.P.
R. J. Gunter, M.P.
Sebastian Haffner
Lord Hall
Michael Hamburger
Hamish Hamilton
Iain Hamilton
Anthony Hartley
Sir William Hayter
Max Hayward
Lord Henderson
Rayner Heppenstall
Douglas Houghton, M.P.
Michael Howard
G. F. Hudson
Cledwyn Hughes, M.P.
Sir Julian Huxley
John Hynd, M.P.
Brian Inglis
A. J. Irvine, M.P.
Barbara Ward Jackson
Dan Jacobson
Douglas Jay, M.P.
Roy Jenkins, M.P.
James Joll
Arthur Koestler
John Lehmann
Bernard Levin
C. S. Lewis
Lord Listowel
Lord Longford
Richard Lowenthal
Roderick Macfarquhar
E. L. Mallalieu, M.P.
John Mander
David Marquand
Roy Mason, M.P.
Christopher Mayhew, M.P.
Cliff Michelmore
James Morris
Lord Morrison of Lambeth
Malcolm Muggeridge
Sir Harold Nicolson
John Plamenatz
William Plomer
Michael Polanyi
Laurens Van Der Post
R. E. Prentice, M.P.
John Douglas Pringle
Terence Prittie
Alan Pryce-Jones
Goronwy Rees
G. W. Reynolds, M.P.
Alan Ross
Sir John Rothenstein
Leonard Schapiro
Hugh Seton-Watson
Denis Mack Smith
John Sparrow
Stephen Spender
Lord Stonham
John Strachey, M.P.
Jeremy Thorpe, M.P.
F. Tomney, M.P.
Hugh Trevor-Roper
John Wain
Sam Watson
C. V. Wedgwood
Dame Rebecca West
Angus Wilson
Guy Wint
C. M. Woodhouse, M.P.
Peregrine Worsthorne
Woodrow Wyatt, M.P.
Michael Young

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of the Federal Republic's internal stability (by crushing any hopes of a future reunification on other than Communist terms) and it would clearly plant the seeds of a new German nationalism which would grow out of a feeling of resentment against the Western "betrayal" of obligations solemnly entered into by the '55 Paris treaties. Many Western observers have, up to now, and without any real justification, delighted in evoking the spectre of such a nationalism; in reality, it has been notably absent from the German scene and, if it has indeed now and then hovered in the wings, has certainly not presented anything but a very shabby shadow of the monster that once threatened the world with destruction and doom. By treating German feeling as a *quantité négligeable*, by refusing to take seriously the prospect of the emotional upheaval certain to be engendered in West Germany by any policy of the kind so frivolously advocated, the West might, in the long run, ruin its own tremendous achievement: the achievement of bringing the defeated enemy back into the Western fold and of directing German energies away from purely national egotism into a wider field of both European and Atlantic collaboration.

In so far as Mr. Haffner has drawn attention to these facts I think he has certainly done a service. Yet I am afraid that he has not served his own purpose well by overstating his case. He might have done better if he had avoided some of his too sweeping statements and had been content with somewhat less dramatic conclusions in order to present his facts more soberly, more realistically and, therefore, more convincingly.

Let me take one instance. I agree with Mr. Haffner that the Germans, had they not overcome their former narrow nationalist outlook, might have felt tempted to seek reunification through neutrality when it was offered to them by Stalin in 1952 and that they have resisted this temptation in favour of entering the Western Alliance. But why on earth should this decision, welcome as it certainly was to the West, be presented as an act of pure magnanimity and generosity on their part? They had many reasons to act as they did: because they feared Communism more than anything else; because they thought that their security would be better served if they got Nato backing against any possible Eastern expansion than if they chose a neutrality which, to them, spelt isolation in a world polarised around two hostile power groups; because they distrusted the motives of the Russian proposal (which was, after all, obviously designed to preventing the European Defence Community and any German rearmament in a Western context) and because they expected the Russians to wriggle out of their offer once it had served its purpose; because they feared that a neutralised Germany might be too dangerously exposed to piecemeal Soviet blackmail; because they had seen the methods by which the Soviet Union had, in its own occupation zone, manipulated an originally "democratic" façade and they were afraid the same fate might be reserved for a unified Germany partly under Russian control; finally, because they still hoped at that time for national unity to be gained by a "policy of strength" which would muster sufficient pressure on Moscow to make it release its German prey. It is true that this hope has turned out to be an illusion. But all the other reasons enumerated were perfectly cogent (if somewhat one-sided) reasons of *national self-interest*; and by heeding them and opting for the West, not only the Bonn government but also the voters who maintained this government in office for more than a decade have deliberately followed a political line motivated neither by magnanimity nor by self-denial but simply by a rational weighing of the chances and the risks *for Germany* inherent in the choice.

Nor can it be said that the Germans, by agreeing to put up with the actual division of their nation and by not pressing their demand for unity by other than verbal claims, have acted out of nothing but statesmanlike consideration and wise restraint. I think we had better face the fact that an important part of West German citizens have scarcely felt Unity to be their overriding political aim. For many of them, at least, it has not been much more than a pious wish far removed from their daily preoccupations. They would have been quite pleased, of course, if their East German "brothers and sisters" had had a chance to get rid of Communist domination and to join them in one free and democratic state. Yet it may be doubted if a majority of them would have been ready to make real sacrifices and to shoulder heavy burdens in order to bring this about. As a matter of fact, the astonishing weakness and ineffectiveness of German nationalism in the post-war era has its real roots less in a political attitude consciously adopted than in a widespread tendency to turn away from "ideological" considerations and to concentrate on material well-being rather than on political ideas of any kind—nationalist or otherwise. I do not mean to diminish the value and the achievement of that new German élite that has drawn clear conclusions from the Nazi catastrophe and has sincerely, even idealistically, embraced a "European" or "Atlantic" outlook. All I want to stress is that this élite still forms a minority—though certainly not an inconsider-

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able one—while the broad, non-political masses of the population care more for the material benefits of the society they are enjoying at present than for extending freedom to those Germans to whom it is still denied.

To SAY ALL THIS does not at all mean taking Mr. Haffner's timely warnings lightly or underestimating the dire effects of a Western policy that would ride roughshod over German interests or would run violently against German sentiments. While I believe that the Germans have only acted rationally in embracing the Western Alliance, I do not find Haffner's interpretation of German psychology very convincing, as I still feel that, in many discussions on the way out of the present crisis, German susceptibilities have not properly been taken into account.

It is true that many Germans (perhaps even most of them) have not cared two hoots about "the German question," and have been perfectly content to let sleeping dogs lie while doing precious little to further their announced national aims. Yet this does not mean in the least that a Western policy which would neglect or even abandon these aims would not create a feeling of "betrayal." You might call such anti-Western resentment utterly irrational in the light of the behaviour of the Germans themselves, and perhaps you would be right; this would not prevent it from cropping up and from endangering gravely the cohesion of the Western world; and it would not prevent a new German nationalism from rising, this time maybe not in Nazi-Fascist but rather in neutralist, or even, partly at least, in pro-Russian and "national Bolshevist" shape.

There has always been a certain tendency in the German mentality towards self-pity, towards feeling thwarted, misunderstood, victimised by sinister forces and by false friends envious of German *Tüchtigkeit*, and these feelings can easily be translated into a sudden irrational aggressiveness. It is not difficult to imagine how a Berlin compromise, reached without even thinking about German reactions at all (let alone heeding them), might reinforce all this and result in upsetting everything that has been achieved in post-war European stability. One has only to imagine the consequences to feel deeply worried by some of the light-hearted proposals for "settling" the German question by placating the Russians. Imagine all that could happen in a land which, having gone through a radical disenchantment, might come also to be exposed to some additional economic (or political) strain . . . clearly, such a "settlement" might unsettle more than it settles.

STILL, IT SEEMS TO ME that these consequences would probably be long-term possibilities rather than the short-term certainties Mr. Haffner has forecast. If Germany's allies stumbled inadvertently into the trap the Soviets are preparing for them, it would be a grievous mistake. But this does not imply that a German "turn to the East" is unavoidable. Most of the reasons which compelled the Western Germans in the early 'fifties to side with the West politically and militarily will still survive, even if they feel dissatisfied with Western performance (as they certainly did in the weeks after August 13th). When the very militarist-minded and frankly nationalist *Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung* recently appeared with the headline "IF THE WEST WILL BETRAY BERLIN, GERMANY WILL LEAVE THE WEST," two prominent nationalist supporters protested strongly against the paper's slogan in letters to the editor; one of them stated that he considered the attitude "politically wrong," and the other asserted that Germany "could not for a moment think of leaving the West." These letters of protest were signed by Grand Admiral Dönitz and Franz von Papen. Nobody would associate their names spontaneously with particularly outspoken pro-Western sentiments; yet I think their position may well be (in this respect at least) closer to reality than Mr. Haffner's.

Let me conclude: I am glad Mr. Haffner has reminded his fellow-countrymen of some truths they have apparently been avoiding; I should feel much happier if, in so doing, he had kept that sense of proportion and that sense of perspective I have so often admired in his other writings.

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Belgrade Notebook

Princes, Puritans, Policemen, and Others — By ANDREW BOYD

GAMAL ABDUL NASSER and Josip Broz Tito settled into their armchairs and exchanged flashing smiles. Archbishop Makarios seemed to materialise suddenly in his seat, stiff and sombre, black beard stiff against black vestments. The young Kings of Morocco and Nepal slipped rather shyly into their places, side by side at the round table. At King Hassan's elbow loomed his towering trans-Saharan neighbour, Modibo Keita, President of the Mali Republic, in a gown of white and dull blue that flowed to the ground. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah surged into the room and clove his way to his place, with a formidable staff in his hand, through a knot of somewhat flustered delegates from Guinea. Habib Bourguiba, presiding, looked around, counting noses—princely, aquiline Arab and Afghan noses; friendly little Buddhist noses; Cuban noses, looking strangely pallid in this African and south Asian context. The muster of principalities and powers was almost complete. Another session of the Belgrade summit conference of non-aligned countries was about to begin.

Minutes passed. The press photographers withdrew. President Tito twiddled the thumbs of his clasped hands, paused to adjust a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, resumed the steady rotary twiddle. President Nasser took out a handkerchief and dabbed his forehead. President Sukarno toyed with his field-marshal's baton; behind him one of his suite, in Indonesian army uniform, fanned himself with a conference document. President Bourguiba whispered to the Yugoslav secretary at his side and began to look enquiringly towards the doors.

President Nkrumah swung round upon his immediate neighbour, the Emperor of Ethiopia, with a cheerful smile and a flip of the wrist. Haile Selassie held himself poker-straight against the back of his chair; after a moment his unchanging face came round, just one degree to the right; the twitch of the thin mouth was barely perceptible. One of the Archbishop's hands stole into view, gently fingered his golden pectoral, and vanished again beneath the black robes. Yugoslavs in bright blue suits fidgeted in corners of the conference chamber. The Algerian insurgents' new leader, Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, sat hunched forward, a sphinx behind dark glasses. More eyes turned to the doors. A whisper ran round the galleries. Bourguiba shrugged. Attendants closed the doors.

A moment later they were flung open again. The Prime Minister of India came in with his principal advisers. R. K. Nehru looked characterically anxious, Krishna Menon uncharacteristically vague. Jawaharlal Nehru himself went straight to his place and sat down with the air of a man too preoccupied to notice his surroundings. Sukarno, on his right, beamed at him in vain. Bourguiba had tinkled his chairman's bell the moment Nehru appeared in the doorway, and now, with almost audible relief, the Belgrade conference settled once more into its stately proceedings.

The Heavyweight

GLOOMILY fiddling with the rose in his buttonhole, while the speeches went soporifically on and, behind him, Krishna Menon's head lolled repeatedly into slumber, Nehru represented Belgrade's biggest catch: in both senses. He had been slow to decide to come at all. India had not been happy about the tactics of the first sponsors of the conference, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, and the United Arab Republic. While bringing in Cuba from the beginning despite its questionable non-alignment, they had kept at arm's length not only European "neutrals" such as Ireland and Sweden, but even Nigeria, the giant of black Africa.

The Indians had come to Belgrade without illusions. They foresaw that the conference would spend most of its time in a revivalist kind of contest, one leader vying with another to prove that he was even more against sin; that the safe sin to be against was colonialism or one of its mutations, and that this would give the conference an anti-Western slant that would reduce its constructive possibilities. They knew they would be exposed to easy criticism either way. Not to come at all would evoke charges that India had parted company with other ex-colonial countries—for this was an ex-colonial

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conference fully as much as Bandung had been —and had sold itself to the West for a mess of economic aid. To come, on the other hand, meant risking public controversy in which India could, again, be easily traduced as a cat's-paw of "imperialism," unless it consented to let the conference slide into little more than a catalogue of individual grievances.

But they also knew that India alone weighed as heavily in the world's scales as the rest of the Belgrade group put together—their combined populations falling short of its by over a hundred million, while none of their leaders measured up to Nehru's stature on the world scene. The Indians came to Belgrade in fighting form, prepared to take unpopularity in their stride.

THEY DID NOT find themselves alone. Nehru's speech was outstanding in its boldness, and drew the familiar charge that he was treating his colleagues like schoolchildren who "could do better;" but it carried the day, and the peace appeal that he drafted captured the world's headlines when the conference ended. Mrs. Bandaranaike of Ceylon weighed in effectively on the side of a balanced appraisal of the world's problems. President Nasser concentrated on showing himself a moderate in all things, except in regard to Israel; and took the defeat of the Arab move for a condemnation of Israel philosophically (later, the Cairo press got so far on to the Nehru bandwaggon that it even claimed the peace appeal as having been Nasser's initiative). U Nu's mild Burmese charm—wonderfully displayed the day he called in the Belgrade children whose noses were pressed against the gate of his villa, and distributed ice cream among them—proved to be no more than a velvet glove on a steely wrist; Burma's calm but unyielding obstruction of the move against Israel was only one of the occasions during the conference on which it held out successfully for sanity.

With infinite blandness, the Chinese press described the outcome of the conference as a triumph for Dr. Sukarno. This was quite a feat of sustained imagery. Sukarno lost his bid to get his claims on West Irian mentioned in the Belgrade declaration; he backed the losers over Israel; his formulation on the German question (which was very similar to Moscow's) was eliminated from the final text; his canvassing for a second Bandung conference was ignored. His insistence that the crisis in great-power relationships was of no serious significance, and that the conference should therefore concentrate entirely on colonialism, was swept aside; and he was awarded the ironic role of carrying to Washington the Nehru peace appeal whose adoption at Belgrade represented the defeat of his main arguments.

NEAR THE END of each day of the conference, in the night club attached to the towering new Metropol Hotel, a shadow-showman with astonishingly long fingers brought the house down with deft profiles of Khrushchev, Kennedy, Stalin, and other political figures. The only statesman attending the conference whom he portrayed was Nehru; and Nehru was his best item—not surprisingly, for an Indian journalist whom I took to see the show recognised the performer with affection as a former fellow student at Santiniketan.

President Sukarno and his large retinue occupied two floors in the Metropol, and the Indonesians patronised the night club in fair numbers. On Sukarno's last night in Belgrade, the cabaret was brought upstairs for a private performance before him and Tito; but minus the shadow play. The Egyptian belly dancer was left without serious competition as the principal attraction.

Rome for the Day

BELGRADE, the "White City," stands on seven hills, like all the best Romes. Its history is one of alternate devastation and obscurity. One must go back to the 14th century to find a Serbian empire, and a short-lived one at that. Yugoslavs like to tell you that they saved Europe from the Turk, at the price of going under themselves. Without passing judgment on what contribution their undoubtedly valiant defence made to their western neighbours' ability later to beat back the Ottoman armies from Vienna, one must accept the fact of the price they paid. When the Nazis battered the fortress city in the bend where Danube joins Sava, they were continuing a tradition many centuries old; Belgrade claims to have been smashed and reconstructed thirty-four times.

Vivid though the memory of German invasion and occupation remains, with the epics of the partisan resistance kept alive by innumerable devices, the memory of the Turks is still more deeply embedded in folklore, in turns of speech, in a thousand unconscious ways. A tale of Sultan Murad turns up as naturally as would, in England, a glancing reference to Queen Victoria. One could not be sure what Yugoslavs really felt when they saw the Bajraki mosque being restored for the use of their pious guests this summer, the guard of honour saluting one robed Moslem potentate after another, the sword of the Prophet gleaming on the bellying flags overhead.

Even friends who stir a vague ancestral un-

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ease are, however, better than no friends at all. Ten years ago Belgrade held a very different "conference of peace," a rather pitiable affair attended by splinter Marxists and other luckless dissidents from many countries in none of which had they any real prospect of power. This year it welcomed a Conference of Heads of State and Government, a dazzling array drawn from the ends of the earth, an assembly the like of which was never seen even at the court of the Great Khan. After a dozen lonely years, Yugoslavia was able to deafen itself with assurances of the number and prowess of its friends. Belgrade was at last measuring up to its seven hills. Moscow might pose as the third Rome, and Peking as the fourth for all they cared. What if the claim that Tito was the only true heir of Marx had fallen on obdurate deaf ears? His new gospel of non-alignment had called into existence a new world (carved mainly from the body of the old), and Belgrade shone out as the very latest of neon-lit Romes, at least for a day.

Retreats and Absences

"SIRE, BELIEVE ME, Your Majesty cannot remain here any longer; I will get everything ready for your departure." Thus one of the valets who, speaking so urgently to their respective masters, revealed to Candide that the six unfortunates who shared his supper table in a Venetian inn were all deposed monarchs.

The crowned heads at Belgrade all had thrones to go home to. But some of the heads of state—both royal and republican—left the conference city with an abruptness that suggested a certain anxiety about being away from base for more than a few days. The mere fact that the rulers of Ethiopia and Nepal had felt able to come at all had impressed many people. Haile Selassie's last foreign journey had given Ethiopia's malcontents the signal for their attempt to seize power. King Mahendra's essay in parliamentary democracy had ended, almost simultaneously, with the regrettable necessity of imprisoning his ministers and taking authority back into his own, as many thought, rather uncertain hands.

Although King Saud was prevented from coming by pains in his thighs, the royalists, on the whole, showed better than the republicans. Dr. Castro's non-appearance stripped the Cuban delegation of its strength as effectively as the shaving of Samson. Without a single beard between them, the Cubans proved a tame lot, whom the conference pacified with a couple of anti-American plums and then overrode. The left wing was further weakened by Sékou Touré's last-minute cancellation. He had actually entered his aircraft at Conakry before he found himself, as he explained in an apologetic telegram, unavoidably detained in Guinea by urgent affairs of state—that is, by a threatening rift in his local monolith. Kassim of Iraq had never shown any serious intention of leaving his uneasy country, particularly when it meant confronting the ranks of his fellow Arabs who were so busily organising a joint garrison with which to foil his claims on Kuwait.

A Bus Stop Named London

HALF-WAY down Boulevard Marshal Tito one comes upon a bus stop clearly marked (in cyrillic lettering) "London." The fact that the ordinary number 12 bus in which I was riding stopped there disposed of the wild notion that this might be a special starting point for airport buses bound for just one destination. The first few locals I asked about it had no more idea why it should be called London than most Londoners would have about the origin of, say, Petty France. It was somehow disappointing to learn, eventually, that a restaurant named London had stood on that corner about forty years ago, and the name had stuck. Belgrade also boasts, as well as Roosevelt Street, a Hyde Park; I still don't know whether the park derives from Roosevelt or from London.

In summer, at least, a Westerner strolling Belgrade streets—the broad boulevards, not the quiet, dusty side lanes of one-storied houses and antique courtyards—must often need to pinch himself to recall that this is eastern Europe and a Communist state at that. The shaggy peasant, the toes of his shoes turned up like Turkish slippers, is an eye-catching exception, in a setting of Italian motor-scooters and the same Italianate styles in dress, make-up, and coiffure as any west European street has to offer on a sunny afternoon. Belgrade's floating banners, its billboards carrying slogans in five languages (colourful but not strident in their design), and most of its fresh paint were attributable to the conference—for which, incidentally, a fair mileage of new road had been paved, at top speed, to ease the statesmen's daily journeys to and from their villas on the classy suburban heights in the south. Not thus attributable were the foreign newspapers at the kiosks, the Western books in the bookshops, the glassy supermarkets, the smart little shops whose displays included Worth perfumes as well as portraits of Tito, the throngs in the open-air café terraces morning, noon, and night. Once or twice a knowledgeable acquaintance pointed to a couple of squat, unamiable characters at a nearby table and assured one that they were UDBA narks; once a friend and I looked round

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to find two of these types listening in on our (highly subversive) talk so blatantly that their ears were almost falling off in our laps. But the knowledgeable assured one that this sort of thing was increasingly vestigial; I never saw anybody look over his shoulder before starting to talk (a habit one might have expected to prevail even if, as someone told me, most of the UDBA men had been withdrawn from the city centre for the duration of the conference, along with the prostitutes); even more indicative was the fact that an obvious foreigner, straying well away from conference territory, drew the normal amount of casual interest that a foreigner draws anywhere, but no more. Neither the intense eagerness to make contact, nor the nervousness about doing so, that a Westerner finds among Russians was to be found here.

If the Western visitor was continually reminded that Milan and Vienna are nearer to Belgrade than is Moscow, what of the city's Asian and African guests? Many of them, I would venture, never felt that they were in anything but a Western country. A bus stop named London must have seemed the most natural thing in the world.

Friendly Phalanx

SOMEBODY pointed out that no less than 140 Yugoslav journalists had been accredited to the conference—seventeen from *Borba* alone. As the Yugoslav press is a pretty monolithic affair, it did seem unlikely that this phalanx was needed in order to present a rich variety of differing assessments, and it was hardly surprising that at least a few people assumed that most of the Yugoslav correspondents had been sent to mix with the outsiders and influence people.

Maybe some of them did. But I spent quite a lot of time in their company, waiting patiently to be given the message, and none came. Nor was there any sign of pumping for information or indications of foreigners' views. Admittedly, I learnt to keep away from the *Borba* boys, who seemed as uninteresting as their sheet. The others proved to be sociable, lively, impressively fluent in English or French (German being more for the older generation), and disinclined to talk serious politics at all, even conference politics. To most of them, the conference seemed to be mainly a glorious break from routine, a slightly intoxicating breath of cosmopolitanism. The provincials reacted as they might in any country: running down Belgrade by comparison with their home towns, although they obviously wouldn't have missed the show for anything. The Bosnian contingent was distinguished by the inclusion of several bright young men and women who insisted that they were Moslems, splendidly improbable though this seemed to me. It seemed even more improbable to the correspondent of an impeccably Moslem daily in Asia, when I introduced him to a young blonde with a distinctly Scots cast of features. She practically had to recite the Quran to convince him.

WHILE THE YUGOSLAV CORRESPONDENTS may have done little or no lobbying, others, of course, did plenty. Most of their work was perfectly above board. Dozens of political organisations had been authorised to send accredited representatives, who had special gallery seats in the conference chamber as well as the right (within reasonable limits) to publish statements that were then circulated by the secretariat. Nationalist parties in still dependent African territories were the largest element in the group, organisations working for "nuclear disarmament" the second. Michael Scott's predictable appearance naturally led his many acquaintances of the press to ask him which capacity he was operating in: this time, it turned out, he was essentially concerned with nuclear arms, though hardly able to escape some identification with the African cause. The South West Africa People's Organisation, two Angolan groups, Kanu, the Uganda National and People's Congresses, Northern Rhodesia's UNIP and Southern Rhodesia's NDP were all represented; the largest non-African element in this category was the Japanese left wing, and Tokyo was also the source of a flood of messages of goodwill and congratulation to the conference.

Mr. Sipalo of UNIP made his mark by passing round copies of what he claimed was a private letter from a "top British minister" to a friend in Rhodesia. The letter, which secured a good quota of publicity in the London press, was full of reassurances to the (white) Rhodesian so couched as to add up to a damning indictment of British policy in southern Africa as being a Machiavellian programme for perpetuating white privilege and power. The Yugoslav journalist who first passed this document on to me later listened with apparent fascination while I explained to a rather sour Mr. Sipalo that the letter, if genuine, was obviously only from the hand of a backbench M.P., not a minister, and that it would have been wiser to present it as such. My Yugoslav friend was visibly unable to decide whether I was acting as an unpaid adviser on tactics to a seditious organisation, or newly demonstrating the infinite extent of British Machiavellianism. Anyway, the Sipalo letter made better reading than most of the conference documents.

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Other active lobbyists and pulse-takers included numerous diplomats from the local embassies, among them the Albanian *chargé d'affaires*, who didn't seem to be finding many takers for the argument that the mere holding of the conference in Belgrade was a terrible error, in as much as Yugoslavia's claim to be non-aligned was a complete fraud. Several of the delegations had brought with them persons who, while equipped with press cards, were openly members of the official team. This at first sight unusual double status was less surprising when one reflected how few of the participating countries possessed a press independent of the party in power.

Among the diplomats who did not seek out the press but were instead sought out by it, Mr. George Kennan, the American ambassador, was naturally a pre-eminent figure. His disenchantment over the line that Marshal Tito took on both Germany and Soviet nuclear tests was very real. But perhaps his forceful expression reflected in part the ordeal of long hours spent cramped in the ambassadors' corner of the stiflingly hot gallery in the conference chamber. The press, uninhibited by protocol, had at least been able to strip down to shirt-sleeves.

IT CANNOT BE SAID that the monstrous regiment of press correspondents who poured into Belgrade, over 800 strong, was entirely happy. The Yugoslav staff mustered to meet their needs did a very creditable job; indeed, being unfamiliar with the normal hazards of, say, transatlantic telephoning, they were apt to apologise needlessly for what they thought were their own shortcomings when in fact they were getting connections as efficiently as any seasoned correspondent would expect. The press centre that had been provided by evicting most of the Yugoslav trade unions' headquarters staff from their premises was palatial, if far from cool in the first days of September. Typewriters that tended to reproduce *"by"* as *"bz"* and *"why"* as *"whz"* were only a small trial to the English-writing contingent (who, of course, included a majority of the Africans and Asians). Cars had been requisitioned from all over Yugoslavia to ensure a taxi service for the press; and if the drivers, being not too familiar with Belgrade, occasionally landed one in what looked by night like darkest Serbia, this was hardly a serious cause for complaint. Slivovitz flowed freely, and sips of thick Turkish coffee kept many a jaded eye open. Relief from the heat and clamour of the press centre was available just round the corner at café tables in the Bejzistan, a cool courtyard adorned with nymphs and fountains. Yet the press was not entirely happy.

The first problem was that of access to delegations. Short of dropping billets-doux on to their heads from the press gallery, there was very little chance of getting in touch with them in the conference building itself. And they were ensconced there each day, with scarcely a break: the morning session would run on into the early afternoon, the chief delegates would hare off to late lunch engagements at each other's villas, and by five o'clock they would be back to sit again into the late evening. Only the most fleet and assiduous correspondents could hope to catch them, as it were, on the run; the more ruthless would pound round the hotels, restaurants, and even night clubs towards midnight and still later, seeking such few survivors as had not gone early to bed in exhaustion or been scooped up into all-night drafting committee sessions.

These ardours yielded, in any case, few stories to supplement the official proceedings. This was not a conference of negotiations between disputing parties. The long formal statements of position that took up most of its time were not being dissected in either open or closed debate. Ninety per cent of the content of the final declaration had been predictable for several months. On the remaining points, the wrangling in closed session began only towards the end of the five-day session, and went on right up to the weary end at two o'clock in the morning of the sixth day, when the declaration itself was read out, effectively killing the various speculative dispatches which the hardest working correspondents had been toiling to put together from the scanty leaks of the last few hours. The delegates then dispersed at top speed without waiting to be asked questions; most of the promised press conferences evaporated into a thin air broken only by the vapour trails of departing aircraft.

Not surprisingly, the press therefore spent more time talking to itself than to anybody else. For once, this was time by no means wasted. The unique nature of the Belgrade conference had drawn together a unique cross-section of journalism. Some newspapers, for example, had sent their diplomatic correspondents; some, their experts on East European affairs; some, their African, and others their Asian specialists. There were glad reunions between colleagues who had worked together in Delhi, in New York, in the Congo.

One might hope that there was at least a fair amount of fruitful cross-fertilisation of ideas between—to take only one example—Asian and African pressmen who had not visited Europe before, and Europeans who had never left it. For this assemblage brought out almost too painfully the yawning width of the many gaps

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in mutual understanding that exist among journalists concerned with international affairs, as among other men. Most evident was the gap between those Europeans who had had some experience of the wider world, and those whose mental limits were still essentially European. Thus, intelligent West Germans whom one would have expected to know better were wholly taken aback by the readiness of so many Asian and African leaders to canvass Herr Ulbricht's claims to respectability. Other Westerners were apparently shaken to find such a consensus in favour of accepting the Peking Government in the United Nations, although the governments that expressed this view had been doing so for years in public debate in New York. Where, one wondered, had these surprised people been for the last few years? Not outside Europe, at all events: either physically or mentally.

Stages of Maturity

THE ELEMENT of naïvety in the reactions of so many correspondents at Belgrade seems to me to go far to explain the sharp criticism, particularly in the American press, that the conference evoked. The idea evidently still persists that non-alignment is a purely spiritual concept, its advocates a disembodied host. The non-aligned of Belgrade were, and are, not an assemblage of abstractions dedicated to finding and retaining a mathematical dead centre exactly half-way between the Sino-Soviet *bloc* and the West, but something inherently much more probable: human beings. Human beings, moreover, with a basically common attitude, despite their sub-division into feudal potentates, young demagogues, stern puritans, easy-going exhibitionists, and so on.

Degrees of relative inclination towards the Communist powers on the one hand or the West on the other are not, in this context, as fundamental as the simple fact that the Belgrade countries (and others) share a common historical background of economic backwardness and Western hegemony. Even Yugoslavia, despite the rapid modernisation of its capital city, despite the Peking press's recent charges that it was no fit companion for emergent Asia and Africa (that Tito, indeed, had been "spokesman for U.S. imperialism" at the conference—a view to which Mr. Kennan would hardly subscribe), shares this background in its essentials; it has experienced German, Austrian, and Italian domination; a U.N. technical assistance mission operates in Belgrade, as in so many Asian and African capitals.

The Belgrade group reveals many different stages of political maturity, with the south Asian countries (Indonesia apart) distinctly more resistant to the simple slogans of anti-Western nationalism than some of the "new" Africans—just as one would expect. It is encouraging to see such maturity developing. But one comes away from an event like the Belgrade conference with a keen awareness that Western disengagement from the old pattern of colonialism, and racial privilege in all its forms, will have to get much nearer to its ultimate end before the West can expect the emergent Afro-Asian world, as a whole, to judge issues between the West and the Communist powers strictly on their merits.

Christmas Forethought

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Mauve and Yellow

By David Daiches

THOMAS BEER was born at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1889, and in 1926 he published *The Mauve Decade* which caused a sensation among sophisticated New Yorkers and stayed for some time on the best-seller lists. It is in its way a brilliant, in its way a perverse, book, and its recent re-publication as a paperback* gives us the opportunity to reflect on the nature of its brilliance and of its perversity. The sub-title is *"American Life at the End of the 19th Century,"* but the book is less history than a cunningly distorted collection of comments, anecdotes, and impressionistic renderings of scenes all done from the point of view of a self-conscious *avant-gardiste* of the mid-1920s. It tells us almost as much about the sophistication of bright young men in New York in the 1920s as it does about America in the 1890s. It is, in fact, a period book about another period, and in the telling the two periods get a little mixed. It is full of startling juxtapositions, rapid staccato bursts of short, wilful sentences, and deliberately provocative (though often by now rather tame) generalisations. Its opening is characteristic:

> They laid Jesse James in his grave and Dante Gabriel Rossetti died immediately. Then Charles Darwin was deplored and then, on April 27, 1882, Louisa May Alcott hurried to write in her journal: "Mr. Emerson died at 9 p.m. suddenly. Our best and greatest American gone. The nearest and dearest friend Father has ever had and the man who helped me most by his life, his books, and his society. Illustrious and beloved friend, good-bye!"

There is, of course, a certain meretriciousness here. The implied but non-existent causal link between the two parts of the first sentence is a pure trick, and there is a special kind of condescension in saying that Louisa May Alcott "hurried to write" of the death of Emerson in her journal, the hurrying being pure (and malicious) invention. But as Beer rushes on with one anecdote (real or doctored) and one slapdash picture after another, the reader becomes aware of the appeal of his exhibitionist energy and forced to share that fascinated and condescending gaze. The witty little sketch of that impoverished professional idealist, Bronson Alcott, and of the effect of fame on his daughter Louisa May, is enormously effective, and remains in the memory. Even more effective is the section to which the sketch of Miss Alcott leads in, the account of the Middle Western woman reformer, "a shadowy Titaness, a terror to editors, the hope of missionary societies, and the prey of lecturers."

Beer speaks from the emancipation of the 1920s (even though he himself can sound very prudish to post-Chatterley ears) and his chapter on "The Titaness" rings with a fine superior scorn.

> She was an emblem, a grotesque shape in hot black silk, screaming threats at naked children in a clear river, with her companionable ministers and reformers at heel. The collapse of American thought excused her forays; all that had been finely stalwart in the Bostonian age had vanished. . . . The confusion of morals with manners, apparently inherent in the world that speaks English, had helped the mental lassitude of the Americans to destroy what was honourable in the Bostonian tradition, and from the remains of that tradition welled a perfume of decay, cants, and meaningless phrases: "the nobility of democracy," "social purity," and the like.

The journalist Julian Ralph (later a war correspondent: Beer does not mention that he wrote a book in 1901 entitled *War's Brighter Side*) once collected twenty-five examples of abusive letters addressed by women to the editors of *Harper's*, the *Century*, and *Lippincott's* magazines protesting against the immorality of the stories printed. Beer or claret had been mentioned in a story without overt disapproval; the social manœuvring of a fictional society woman is an insult to "Western womanhood"; the

* Vintage Books, New York.

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words "damn," "vomit," and "rape" had been mentioned. Ada Channing Walker wrote attacking the popular *Trilby* and also appealed in vain to Grover Cleveland to oust a known horse-racer from the Democratic Party. Frustrated, she prepared a note on marriage for her niece, advising her to marry only a man resembling "our precious saviour, Jesus Christ, in manners and appearance." Beer's comment is characteristic: "Unable to do so, from lack of data, the girl mourned her aunt two months and married a sugar-broker, six feet three inches long." The use of "long" for "tall" emphasises the niece's contempt of her aunt's advice.

Beer gives an account of the American girl in Europe that differs sharply from Henry James's, though one can see a trace of Daisy Miller. "Richard Harding Davis saw her browbeating bandmasters for American tunes, just as he had seen her romping and running races in staid English hotels.... In spring they flooded New York's marmoreal hotels, waving steamer tickets from table to table and threatening to meet each other in London, and autumn saw them home again, radiant in fresh frocks, hats rejected by the prostitutes of Paris as too gaudy for their use." And the husbands trailed behind, "bullied all across Europe by Mother and the Girls." But there was no real emancipation here; Mother remained a Titaness in spite of Paris. Beer is at pains to show that kinds of art and literature allowed in Europe became immoral if produced in America. But it is not their prudishness so much as their moral shallowness and stupidity that most angered him. "It is not alleged against the women of the Mauve Decade that they invented cheap cruelty and low social pressures, but that they erected these basenesses into virtues by some defensive sense of rectitude, and a generation of sons was reared in the shadow of the Titaness, aware of her power, protected by nothing from her shrill admonitions."

ALL THIS SOUNDS LIKE the grimmest kind of mid-Victorian respectability. Why, then, the Mauve Decade? "Mauve is just pink trying to be purple," Whistler once remarked. Such pinkness as there is to be found in the period as described by Beer is the political variety. On page 44 we are introduced to "a tall, harshly beautiful young man from Nebraska named William Jennings Bryan" and "a pallid, unconsciously emotional North German lawyer, John Altgeld." This leads into an account of the depression of 1893–94, the activities of the Populists, the great Pullman strike of 1894, Coxey's army, and the activities of Mark Hanna in helping to get McKinley nominated and then elected President by the Republicans. It is an excited, breathless, impressionist account, which will bewilder many a British reader who is not familiar with the political history involved, for Beer's technique is to weave a pattern of anecdote and impression over a fabric of facts that are implied but not presented. We are told that "the terrible drum of the Silver Knight sounded from city to city," but we are not told that Bryan, the eloquent proponent of free silver, had won the Democratic presidential nomination and that this was why "it was now quite necessary to elect McKinley." The outcome of that memorable election is briefly indicated thus:

> After a while torn posters blew in the streets and the emotions sank away. Henry George cried: "Oh, what did it matter about Free Silver? It's too bad, too bad!" and went pacing up and down his rooms at Fort Hamilton in distress; the people had lost again! In the high, yellow dining-room of the Union League Club above Fifth Avenue, Theodore Roosevelt assured some men that Hanna had done remarkably well for an inexperienced person. One of his hearers choked and upset a glass.

The purple in this narrative is provided by Beer himself. He moves on from his impressionistic portrait of politics to give us a vivid glimpse of crude Western millionaires flocking to New York to spend their money. Henry Miller, the self-made cattle magnate from the West, attended a performance in New York of the popular play, *The Cowboy and the Lady*; in the middle he rose, "said 'Chesus!' violently, and stalked up an aisle muttering." The "altering society beyond the Mississippi" begged in vain for a great comic writer to record its changes. In spite of some attempts at realism, nobody seemed able to portray accurately the Western women. We then get a glimpse of Frank Norris shopping in San Francisco's Chinatown with "a very pretty lady," followed by some random remarks on Ambrose Bierce (who "erected his mortuary filigrees with traceries from the style of Edgar Poe") and on Chester Bailey Farnald, "distinguished godson of Kipling," who neglected his bizarre talent for "chilly pathos" in order to "steer away into dubious seas of pallid social comedy."

One of the great curses of American society in the 1890s, as earlier, according to Beer, was its orators. Frances Willard, the temperance reformer and one of the organisers of the Prohibition Party, was introduced to an audience thus: "One day an angel will take a pen of diamond and dip its point in the sun's chosen rays. Then she will write, high above the proud titles of Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, and Lucretia Mott, the name of our loving sister in Christ's work who is with us this evening." Beer has great fun with all this (including Bryan's "cross of gold" speech) and records the growth of opposition with relish. "It wasn't

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until July of 1896 that a forgotten illustrator, Walter Appleton Clark, dropped a journal showing the styles in oratory at Chicago and proposed to a gathering of Bohemians in Buchignani's café that all orators be strangled at birth. He sent Buchignani from table to table with a long strip of tissue and on this ballot thirty men voted for the strangling of orators, save one, who scribbled: 'Why not boil them in oil?'" There was certainly plenty of purple in the oratory of the decade, most of it (argues Beer) directed against what was conceived to be vice and in favour of purity. Beer sketchily traces the growth of the myth that the American countryside was "pure" and quotes a "minor Populist speaker," Paul Suckow, who assured a New York audience in 1891 that there was no such thing as vice in Kansas. "In 1896 the purity of the inner United States was proclaimed by both political parties jointly and severally." Beer quotes illegitimacy figures in disproof of this, but he leaves it unclear whether he disapproves of purity or merely of naïve oratory about it. Oscar Wilde's visit to America was no great success ("his books sold badly and his plays were just successful") but "Wilde was mentioned by clergymen in at least nine hundred known sermons between 1895 and 1900." He was Sin incarnate. In 1899 undergraduates were buying for twenty dollars "a set of photographs in a scarlet cover lettered, 'The Sins of Oscar Wilde.'" But sin was European, not American, and Wilde had no real influence in the United States: American tourists asking their way in bad French to Wilde's grave in Paris provide the last picture flashed out for us by Beer in the chapter called "Depravity."

A SHORT CHAPTER on the status of the Catholic Irish in America during the decade almost goes into sociology, but though it is amusing and full of quotable anecdotes it is altogether too scrappy and arbitrary to be really informative. In chapter 5, "The Unholy Host," it looks as though we are coming to an account of a real revolt against the claptrap moralism of the period, but instead we get some malicious and inaccurate comment on R. L. Stevenson, who was not a real decadent like the French and English *fin-de-siècle* writers and was indeed "invoked as an image of chastity" against "the yellow and lavender carouse" of the European æsthetes. At this point in his narrative Beer seems to be looking for a real American decadence and to be unable to find one. He records with admiration the ironies and enthusiasms of Harry Thurston Peck of Columbia, a rare example of "the superior American who wanted to be mundane, definitely sophisticated in the better sense," and one "who honestly strove to be liberal." But in the end, Beer notes sadly, he succumbed to moralism, going so far (and this from a man who had defended Zola!) as to scold Guy Wetmore Carryl for his epigram, "It takes two to make one seduction." (Beer does not note that Peck committed suicide in 1914. There are very many things that Beer does not note.) A few more examples of the "scattering and, of course, ineffective effort towards a primary sophistication in American letters" in the 1890s are briefly recorded, only for a further list of "intellectual timidities" to emerge. And then in contrast we suddenly get the giant figure of William Sumner, the great pioneer sociologist, "a cold, ponderous groper, an Episcopal clergyman who threw off his silk and became deliberately an analyst of society, and the last libertarian of the 19th century in the United States." Sumner's "wrestling with the moralistic governors of Yale who dreaded his use of irreligious and rational texts" has Beer's unqualified approval. This "declared enemy of restrictive legislations, educational fig leaves, and fluffy little white dogs," who was "the first American educator to approach the topic of decency without evasive words," is the only character in the book to have the author's wholly unqualified admiration. But his influence on life and letters was negligible. The magazines continued as prudish as ever. In 1896 the editor of the *Century* rejected (having at first accepted) a story because he found in it the sentence: "the bullet had left a little blue mark over the brown nipple." The author protested that the nipple was male, "hence not lascivious," but to no avail. Yet there was "a rising passion for urbanity, champagne, and Anna Held" (the French-American actress and chanteuse whose pertness, beauty and much-publicised milk baths were widely known, though, characteristically, Beer does not say who she was). The book closes with an adroitly presented little picture of Anna Held holding up a mammoth New York parade which included Governor Theodore Roosevelt in August 1899 because she wanted to cross the street.

The victory of mauve over purple? We are not told what it meant.

TO TURN from this exhibitionist, personal, preposterously arbitrary, yet in its shameless way brilliant, account of American life at the end of the last century to Mr. Graham Hough's sensitive, informed, and genuinely exploratory book on that phase of romanticism which began with Ruskin and moved through the pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, Pater and the Rhymers' Club to Yeats,* is to move to a very

* *The Last Romantics*, recently re-issued as a University Paperback by Methuen, 12s. 6d.

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different world indeed. True, several of the writers and artists discussed by Mr. Hough are mentioned also by Beer, but Beer only flashes their names on to the screen for a few seconds as an elliptic gesture for or against something. Mr. Hough's concern is to find out. Yet there is something personal in his book, too.

"During the war," he tells us in his Preface, "most of which I spent as a prisoner of the Japanese, I was fortunate enough to have with me a copy of Yeats's poems; and in the intervals of more pressing activities I read and thought about them a good deal. Continuing to ruminate on these matters, in pleasanter circumstances later on, I became interested in the genesis of Yeats's ideas from those of the small poetic circle with whom he associated in the nineties. They in turn seemed to owe almost everything to Pater and the Pre-Raphaelites, and from them I was inevitably led back to Ruskin." One cannot help feeling that this train of thought and of events was no accident: "the new ideas about the arts and their relation to the religious and social order," whose origin and development Mr. Hough is concerned to trace, are of importance to him as a man, we are convinced, and not only as an academic teacher and critic: this is *his* period, we feel, and he is most at home when discussing it. Beer uses the Mauve Decade as an excuse to take a stance; Mr. Hough treats the æsthetic movement as something which compels investigation. The personal element is thus present in both books, yet in two quite different ways. Not that Mr. Hough doesn't also enjoy his epigram, his crack at his pet hates and follies (his fatal Cleopatra in a New Statesman-like wit, but it seduces him less here than in some of his other works); they are, however, frankly presented as asides, not as the *raison d'être* of the book.

Beer never defines the ideal of æsthetic sophistication for which he looks to his characters in vain, unless it be simply the courage to print the word "whore" or "nipple." Mr. Hough's whole intent is to define and explain. The beginning of it all lies "somewhere in the dense jungle of Ruskin's works"—so much many of us had suspected without clarifying our minds much further. Mr. Hough, in the most lucid exposition of the development of Ruskin's thought that I have read, notes the originality of Ruskin's critique of visual appearances and shows how this led him to a two-fronted fight against both the classical doctrine of generalisation as represented by Reynolds and what he conceived to be the dull literalness of the Dutch school. The eye must be educated to see properly: Wordsworth maintained that

The eye it cannot choose but see,

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but Ruskin argued that the routine habitual use of sight is quite unrewarding. To see Nature properly—to note with absolute precision the shapes of clouds and of trees and rocks—is a *moral* exercise.

> The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way.... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one.

In spite of all the confusions that Ruskin later got himself into over the question of the relation of art and morality, Mr. Hough argues (and rightly, I am convinced) that essentially Ruskin never wanted to short-circuit art by ethical and emotional considerations. We are given the key passage, from *The Stones of Venice*:

> ... it is well when we have strong or poetical feeling manifested in painting, to mark this as the best of the work, but it is not well to consider as a thing of small account the painter's language in which that feeling is conveyed; for if that language be good and lovely, the man may indeed be a just moralist or a great poet, but he is not a painter, and it was wrong of him to paint.... On the other hand, if the man be a painter indeed, and have the gift of colours and lines, what is in him will come from his hand freely and faithfully; and the language itself is so difficult and so vast, that the mere possession of it argues that the man is great, and that his works are worth reading.

A whole area of modern criticism—and not only in the visual arts—can be said to spring from this perception of the relation between vision and technique. It is quite true that in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin can make the most absurd correlations—between, say, the "heathen" Papacy and the formalism of some aspects of Venetian Ecclesiastical Gothic sculpture (both bad, therefore) and the true Protestantism associated with more naturalistic elements in other designs in the same building (both good)—but it is also true, as Mr. Hough points out, that "however eccentric his judgments, he nearly always succeeds in connecting them with the thing seen." Ruskin's views about the ways in which architecture expresses moral qualities are of course wholly unfashionable today: "most people who are interested in architecture would revolt at the suggestion that a building expresses obedience, or sacrifice; though curiously enough they would not mind saying that it expresses power." That final comment by Mr. Hough makes us think again.

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Stuart

One line from all this leads to Morris and the further investigation of the relation between art and the social order, another leads to æstheticism and the apparent divorce of art from all social and moral considerations. The remaining chapters (which comprise the bulk) of *The Last Romantics* explain and illuminate this paradox. Rossetti's work involves a retreat from contemporary life and preoccupations (though this is an over-simplification: there are exceptions) because it carries a quasi-Ruskinian view to a revival of traditional religious symbols which, however, no longer have their traditional religious content, and this in turn leads to the sensibility of the *fin-de-siècle*. "The concept of a love which can never be satisfied by its simple bodily objects is not absorbed by Rossetti as it was by Dante into any total scheme of life," but it nevertheless has, Mr. Hough urges, profound psychological relevance for our time. "Rossetti is attacking some of the central neuroses of our culture." The problem is that of defining the relation between our æsthetic experience and the moral awareness to which, however obliquely, it is related. Morris, admirable for his energy and his versatility, tried several ways of establishing that relationship; but, Socialist though he was, he was led to an idealisation of selected aspects of the past and a simple-minded anti-

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industrialism because he lived in a period "when none of the prevailing social ideals can offer any permanent satisfaction to poetry." (This is one generalisation that we could wish Mr. Hough to have explored in greater detail.) Pater built his bridge between art and morality by extending the æsthetic to cover both: part of the æsthetic appeal that Christianity had for Marius was its binding together a community in charity. If this did not have the result of reducing all religion and morality to ritual, as is commonly held, it did mean a limitation in his implied definition of religion and morality: the communal sense of Christianity is not its unique feature. Nevertheless, Pater was struggling with a real problem, and his way of struggling has had a lasting effect.

Whistler comes less well out of this examination—he was often confused and sometimes self-contradictory—but his emphasis that the artist's job is not to transcribe the harmonies of Nature but to compose his own harmonies out of the suggestions he may find in Nature was surely salutary, and indeed more adequate as an account of what the artist does, as Mr. Hough reminds us, than the crude Pre-Raphaelite prescription to "follow Nature." Still, in merely backing away from the middle classes and flaunting the artist's lack of concern with the people and they with him, he encouraged, consciously or not, a barren bohemianism.

And Wilde, who got everything from Ruskin and Pater and Huysmans and others and turned it all to "sham intensity and reach-me-down exquisiteness" comes off worst of all; he is best when most frivolous, except perhaps in the contrived melodrama of his own life. Yet even the life dribbled away sadly at the end: one of the most impressive passages in Beer's book is his picture of a young American in Paris in 1900 being bored by the sadly-contrived conversation of the half-drunk Wilde.

Enfin Yeats vint; and how Yeats came out of all this (but he came out of Ireland too) is perhaps the most remarkable part of the whole story. Of course not all of Yeats can be dealt with in this context. Mr. Hough stresses Yeats's Jungian belief in the Great Memory and pleads for more attention to what Yeats actually says in his poetry. We come back in the end to the relation between Symbol and Truth, which has been haunting us from the beginning.

"Are Byzantium and the collective unconscious psychological or metaphysical entities?" asks Mr. Hough towards the end of his book. The collocation gives away a certain bias; surely Byzantium is what it becomes in a given poetic context, while the collective unconscious is a

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psychologist's hypothesis or perhaps conclusion. Mr. Hough wants the Truth, and is impatient with those who are satisfied with less. I am not at all sure that I would end by posing the questions which Mr. Hough poses, but then I have long since given up the search for the Truth with a capital "T." I claim no superiority for this; on the whole I would rather be with Mr. Hough than with Mr. Beer. Beer looked at the American 'Nineties from the mid-1920s and had fun with that benighted decade; Mr. Hough, very much, it seems to me, a 19th-century man at heart, sees 19th-century English æsthetic problems with a genuinely inward vision, and what is more sees them as real and continuing. They are indeed real and continuing, and that is one very good reason for the reissuing of Mr. Hough's rewarding book.

An Etiology of Success

A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. By Oswald Doughty. *Oxford University Press*, 50s.

Rossetti no doubt hoped (in spite of disclaimers and a fear of scandal), and no doubt knew, that his life would be written not once, but many times. I doubt if that is a thing which most good poets would wish for themselves. If you contemplate five years out of your own life and motives, mustn't you agree they would take a bit of self-unravelling, now, while you are alive to cross-examine yourself or to be cross-examined? And can you expect that anyone else, without you, is going to get the skein clear, the image accurate? At the best, a myth of yourself will be constructed. You will be posthumously repotted, upside down, to afford a lecture on the importance of your *roots*.

Poets, then, who read biographies of other poets, must find them at the best abhorrently fascinating. But if the poems are good (and are not to be evaluated or explained away simply, for example, as "Freudian wish-fulfilment dreams," or products of "the imaginary, compensatory love for erotic frustration"), the biography has at any rate to be a gloss, to some extent, on moments of pure consciousness. Professor Doughty does not make one sure—and does not seem to assure himself either—that such moments were common in Rossetti's life or work. "Gabriel's whole existence," he confesses after a great many pages have bowled past, "was chiefly an unconscious attempt"—I doubt the 'unconscious'—"to realise literary fashions in life;" and of course to write poems is a literary fashion. My own premise (examine for yourself Rossetti's poems, paintings, drawings, etc.) is that he mainly produced fakes or falsities or frigidities or pretences or whatever term you care to use, throughout his life, in accordance with that very determined, even very ruthless, realising of literary—and painterly—fashions. If that is so, a life of Rossetti, or the reading of such a life, becomes a different exercise, abhorrent for different reasons or fascinating for different reasons, which pertain both to subject and biographer in so far as each is deluded or deluding, is not recognising or is concealing a nasty, not uncommon, life-situation in the arts.

Painting or writing, Rossetti appears to me a poeticiser, an art-infatuated, idealising manipulator of sham, of style derived from styles. Language enters him from language already ordered and used, attaches itself to situations, and leaves him unrefreshed, unmodified; and from end to end of this long, often candid account of Rossetti I find Professor Doughty failing to reconcile his admissions with the deductions which absolutely must follow from them and which agree altogether with the products. First, let me refer you to an example of these products. When—as it appears from his own mouth—Rossetti had for a while to leave Kelmscott and Jane Morris, William Morris' wife (because there was a danger that their relationship, if it were known or persisted in, might be used to reinforce or justify the attack made upon his poems by Robert Buchanan) he wrote a sonnet *Without Her*, which is filled, Professor Doughty says, "with the overwhelming sense of an immediate physical and spiritual desolation." "I cannot tell you," Rossetti whispered with sobs later on to Hall Caine, "at what terrible moment it was wrung from me." The moment may have been terrible enough; the words, though, which are wrung out are soggy with his usual literary infusion:

> *Tears, Ah me! for love's good grace,*
> *And cold forgetfulness of night or day.*
> *What of the heart without her? Nay, poor heart,*
> *Of thee what word remains ere speech be still?*
> *A wayfarer by barren ways and chill—*

and so on, in commonplace. It may overwhelm Professor Doughty; it does not overwhelm me; and it does seem to me, like nearly all his work, congruent with the judgments Professor Doughty makes about him—that his existence was an attempt to realise a literary fashion, that he was "largely subservient at heart to the conventional standards of the time," a half-prude

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(allied to a half of indulgent nastiness), that (in the affair of the exhumation of his poems from his wife's coffin) he was "the changeable widower rifling his dead wife's grave at the dictate of literary ambition," that he was distinguished more by identifying himself with imaginary situations than by "a true and powerful imaginative faculty," that "both his life and art"—he calls this the 'basic fact'—"were dominated by dream," that "he was trying to live his myth," that after his death the 'Rossetti legend' entered its new phase of 'canonisation,' etc.—though in a kind of dumb ambivalence Professor Doughty goes on and on with his poet as if (quotations, evidence, and all notwithstanding) Rossetti really had earned, in the one possible way, the eminence awarded him by a toadying deluded posterity. And he does not do much to contradict what he calls "the cynical story" that Rossetti 'ordered' Morris and Jane Burden, the Oxford groom's beautiful daughter, to marry, "so that Jane should at least be kept within the Pre-Raphaelite circle." His own chapters re-write that remark, inferentially: as if it wasn't that Janey Burden should be kept within the Pre-Raphaelite circle so much as within reach of Rossetti; where she remained on and off.

At Kelmscott can be seen a bed-hanging embroidered by Jane Morris. When it was hung up—according to Whistler—between Jane Morris' bed and William Morris', Howell, the court cad of the Pre-Raphaelites, reported to Rossetti that it was too short after all, and "that some night Morris might crawl under it." "He wouldn't dare!" Rossetti declared, bringing his fist down on the table with a bang. Morris himself commented on Rossetti—and he should have known—that he was at times an angel, at times a "damned scoundrel."

IF HE HAD Rossetti and his wife in mind when he made that remark, Morris would also have been aware that Rossetti—as Professor Doughty cheerfully admits—rankly leched at need with other women, tough 'unspiritual' ones who didn't have Janey Morris' arcane and excusing look of spirituality. I suspect that Buchanan's attack on Rossetti in *The Fleshly School of Poetry* was in reality supported on a fairly exact knowledge of Rossetti's fleshly and a little crawly relationships; and for what it matters, the evidence that Rossetti adds up to a cracking (and rather typical) 'beauty' hypocrite, is quite clear, in my opinion. He may have divided into angel at one time or in one moment and damned scoundrel in another. What does matter is that the 'art works' with a few youthful exceptions, match the addition;

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they match the conscious pose of the boy christened Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti who reversed the order, dropped the Charles (after the great Lyell, the geologist, who was his godfather), reduced the Gabriel (after his father) to G, and launched himself as "Dante G. Rossetti"; they match the conscious pose of the velvet-coated poet-cum-artist, always afraid of being found out, who could counter Buchanan's attack by writing, in TV. Epilogue language, that in his poems "all the passionate and just delights of the body are declared—somewhat figuratively it is true, but unmistakably—to be as naught if not ennobled by the concurrence of the soul at all times." That being so, the validly entertaining problem of Rossetti's life is simply to explain how a faker so imposed and so maintained his self-valuation. How has Rossetti's myth survived (though one may believe it has retreated now into somewhat academic reserves)?

There were several parties, of course, to the exaltation, in his life and after his death: Rossetti, Rossetti's friends, and the high art public bored with Tennyson and Browning and not satisfied with Swinburne. Most of Professor Doughty's evidence relates, as it should, of course, to the first party. The *pietas* of the members of the second party, the deceased writer's friends, advanced themselves as well as Rossetti; and a high art public always infects easily, always desires to be, and to continue to be, gulled. Certainly a few notes about the role of the first party, Rossetti himself, may be useful both to future self-promoters and to just estimaters. First of all appearance helped. Rossetti looked and acted the poet, the artist, the exotic, the friend of artists; his appearance was confirmed by his English-Italianism, by the fact that he wore the sacred name. Forbes-Robertson recalled meeting this viol of Art not long before his *Poems* appeared in 1870:

> His face was pale, the colour of old ivory as it were, but it glowed under excitement. His forehead was high-domed and broad, the brown eyes deep-sunk, lambent and sad, with the skin about them of a much darker tone than the rest of his face.... The face was very handsome, deeply striking, with its calm nobility and impressiveness—one of those rare faces, in short, that once seen are never forgotten. His voice——

Well, we needn't continue: it was the voice—'rich,' 'deep,' 'velvet'—which would have poetically throbbed on a lecture tour or via the B.B.C. His charm, a Pre-Raphaelite hagiographer wrote, "lay in the artistic colouring of his mind, arrayed as it was in the fascinations of a Provençal attire." (Samuel Butler, that basher of idealist bubbles, thought differently:

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LONGMANS

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"I dislike his face and his manner and his work," he wrote in 1872—so Professor Doughty has to write him off as 'crochety'—"and I hate his poetry and his friends. He is wrapped up in self-conceit and lives upon adulation.")

SUCCESS IN PAINTING was twinned at last in 1870 by success in poetry; *Poems by D. G. Rossetti* appeared in April to loud applause, setting him, Professor Doughty says in his usual fresh way, "almost in a class apart" as poet and painter. I doubt if any poet, ever, troubled more about the reception of his first book of poems, if any poet ever contrived to make the applause so continuous and so universal. "Organising his army with consummate skill, in a two-months' masterly campaign he seized in advance every attainable point of vantage," *i.e.*, he contrived "that the critics appointed to review his volume in the various journals and magazines were almost entirely personal friends and supporters." He sent the chosen critics early proofs, and then copies in provisional covers in advance of the review copies. Failing with only two papers, he cornered the *Standard*, the *Graphic*, the *Telegraph*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Edinburgh Courant*, the *Westminster Review*, the *Athenæum*, the *Globe*, the *Sunday Times*, *Fraser's*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *Academy* (in which he forced a reluctant but art-respecting William Morris, of all people, to review poems, some of which Morris must have known were about his own wife). For additional safety he sent presentation copies to the mandarins, including Ruskin, Tennyson, and Browning.

The walls of Jericho fell before such trumpetry. "There has been no work of the same pitch since Dante sealed up his youth in the sacred leaves of the *Vita Nuova*," Swinburne wrote about the love sonnets in his high-temperature piece in the *Fortnightly*, in which he spoke of Rossetti as Dante's "namechild." By the end of December a sixth edition had been published. G. F. Watts, who was to be O.M., that Establishment confectioner of symbols, that spirit-husband of exquisite Ellen Terry (who escaped from him), that mandarin of fake mandarins, "placed him at once among the greatest of English poets." And this is the decade in which Hopkins, in secret, wrote *The Wreck of the Deutschland* and most of his great ecstatic poems, whose authenticity of style, ironically, is so much the contradiction of Rossetti's idealist, highly publicised cook-ups.

I AM SURE Professor Doughty did not intend that this big book should serve as a primer of the etiology of literary sham and literary success. It does so very well, all the same. The Rossetti poems, the Rossetti pictures, the

The Story of FABIAN SOCIALISM

MARGARET COLE

This is the first history of the Fabian Society to be published for more than forty years. Margaret Cole was an intimate friend of many of the great Fabians—the Webbs, Shaw, Wells, Pease, Cripps, and Lord Attlee—to name only a few. Her vividly written book is illustrated with little-known and fascinating cartoons and photographs — many from the Fabian archives. *30s*

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HEINEMANN

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Rossetti story, involved so oddly in the inflation of a dull-witted though beautiful woman of low origin into a Muse and a Proserpine who had to return at times to Pluto-Morris, made it certain, too, that sooner or later the Old Bailey would have to hear that classic statement which it heard in 1960, *And then we eff*. Henry James and Bernard Shaw, and Butler, were some of the very few who saw through the tapestry. Both James and Shaw looked at Rossetti's Janey Morris, and observed, if a woman no longer (*and then we eff*), at any rate something not altogether right about the Ideal Damosel, James seeing in the corner in Queen's Square a "dark silent mediæval woman" nursing "mediæval toothache" on the sofa, with a handkerchief to her face, Shaw recording that the only remark of this stupid yet stupefying beauty's he could remember "was that once, at dinner, on passing him a second helping of pudding she assured him: 'That will do you good. There's suet in it.'" Per contra (so we have to have Lady Chatterley and Mr. Hoggart) the silly-billies and boobies continued in a long art obeisance—such as William Rothenstein, who ineffably saw in her, the Professor tells us, "a splendid Sibyl from the Sistine Chapel," a Laura, a Simonetta Vespucci, a Vittoria Colonna.

Geoffrey Grigson

Four Poets

Poems. By Dom Moraes. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*, 10s. 6d.

Some Men are Brothers. By D. J. Enright. *Chatto & Windus with Hogarth Press*, 10s. 6d.

A Common Grace. By Norman MacCaig. *Chatto & Windus with Hogarth Press*, 10s. 6d.

The Drunk in the Furnace. By W. S. Merwin. *Rupert Hart-Davis*, 12s. 6d.

All the literary hailings we have had over the past decade—the hailing of prodigies, movements, renaissances and their subsequent collapses—suggest an ominous kind of hysteria. Partly due, perhaps, to an underlying realisation that the verbal culture is being pushed aside by a visual one, but more, one fears, to the general floundering about for something to fill the moral vacuum of the culture as a whole.

The young Indian poet Dom Moraes has had the misfortune to get caught up in this process. Looking at the chi-chi naïve cover of his volume and finding, at first glance, the contents rather in accord with it, one is tempted to write the whole thing off as a luxury product, the lispings of an élite-pet. And yet one thinks of Keats' first things and Yeats' and realises that there is a deceptive strength in this kind of verse; having the courage of one's own naïvety is a difficult and promising thing and certainly a much sounder basis for growth than the clever apeing of maturity our English schools frighten most young poets into. And yet this is still begging the real question, that of quality. Moraes' imagery is seldom memorable; his movement, however, has a delicate-stepping assurance and behind it one always feels a real speaking voice, its tone moving between raptness and candour but mostly sustaining a kind of mild exaltation, a little enamoured of itself but occasionally nakedly tender.

Finally, about Moraes, one is left wondering how it is possible for anyone (especially an Indian) to still live in such a sheltered poetic world. Since Rimbaud the Chamber of Maiden Thought has had graffiti on its walls.

Mr. Enright is a poet who certainly does live in the real world; he is one of the few writers of any kind who is aware of the judgment the hunger of two-thirds of the world is continually passing on us, putting us, no matter how much in the right in our particular sphere, always finally in the wrong—even in our pity. An awareness either contorting him into a hysterical clowning

Giggling on the edge of a precipice—
Shameful! They'll think you haven't noticed it . . .

or leaving him with the stricken numbness of this—

The shame would be to write of such a thing.
A little money, if you like, you may—
If you can find his hand.
That's perfectly all right. As you might pay
The entrance fee to some museum.
Not Art, though. Natural History, say.

In face of this it would be churlish, at the least, to complain of Enright's often slapdash writing—especially since, as that "Not Art" hints, the offhand style could be said to be a deliberate part of the content—an expression of his often-voiced contempt for the life-denying perfectionism of Art with a capital "A."

And yet for all this one can't help wishing he had stayed longer in the Moraes cocoon; not having done his homework on sunsets and true love, he just can't bring sufficient mastery of language to the on-the-spot complexity of his feelings. Surely an integrity that insists on breaking its own tools has become a sophistry—indeed the integrity cult has been having a blight-

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ing effect lately on poetry all round, producing a crop of dour and stunted miniaturists; in Enright's case keeping the poet jumping about on the hot bricks of his conscience with never time to focus long enough to write the first-rate poetry which we know he can.

Mr. MacCaig, on the other hand, is very much "Art" and very fond of words like "paradigm." He could be described as a Wallace Stevens Metaphysical with a Scotch tanginess to keep his metaphysics fresh, even if not warm. A good example is the poem "Ardmore," a completely successful metaphysical lyric. And yet it is amazing how poetry so professional in its technique can remain so essentially amateur—the poet engages so little of his person that it remains "week-end poetry," however skilled. There is much too much of this kind of thing—

Colour is comment of the cheating eye.
This bay, these islands walk themselves away
(When I have put my lust of looking by
And sink unnoticed into my natural grey)
To an odd world where senses never pry.

We (and especially Mr. MacCaig) could do with more of this—

And the man in his man-ness, passing, feels
suddenly
Hypocrite found out, hearing behind him that
Vulgar vibrato, thin derisive me-eh.

Among this group of poets, W. S. Merwin is easily the most important. He writes longish pieces of plain-style blank verse a little like Edwin Muir but more dramatic—often, indeed, rather like "character" monologues. Occasionally one feels that this is a device deliberately used to counteract the peculiar overall paleness of the *persona* of the poet himself; one feels, too, that the Saxon brawniness of a group of poems towards the end of the book (the title poem included) is a similar device, its pedigree blatantly early Hughes and late Dylan Thomas—

He and his, unwashed all winter
In that abandoned land in the punished
North, in a gnashing house sunk as a cheek,
Nest together, a bunting bundle crumpled
Like a handkerchief on the croaking
Back-broken bed jacked up in the kitchen.

—a style not at all suited to the usually delicate metaphysical flavour of his verse, its most characteristic effect being one of "absence"

As of maps on its hands; whether
They lead anywhere at all.

Not a good day's walk above it
The meteors burn out in the air to fall
Harmless in empty fields, if at all.

Richard HUGHES

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

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.....and her chair went on
Rocking all by itself with nothing alive
Inside it to explain it, nothing; nothing.

One is rather at a loss to explain why a poet of such high accomplishment should leave one finally with a feeling of having so little to say. Perhaps, paradoxically, this is the very thing he is saying; his whole work, like so many of his individual poems, being a definition of a void. Yet whatever the reason, this paleness is more real than any attempt at false vigour—in fact, most haunting.

Lastly, I would like to recommend for its freshness and authenticity a pamphlet by Royston Ellis, a poet still under twenty—"Jiving to Gyp," published by the Scorpion Press.

Harry Fainlight

Short Stories

Pick of Today's Short Stories. Edited by JOHN PUDNEY. *Putnam*, 15s.

Introduction: Stories by New Writers. *Faber*, 18s.

40 Best Stories from Mademoiselle. *Gollancz*, 21s.

In This World. By EUGENE ZILLER. *Gollancz*, 16s.

IT IS NOT particularly easy to see from the ninety-odd short stories represented by these four collections which way the form is going—or has gone—since one last gave it a sidelong glance. It can only be a convenient fallacy anyway that short stories have any true collective personality, unless you make it large and general enough to embrace such dissimilar offspring as an Esquire-type story, anecdotal, situational, plotted, explicit; and the reserved little utterance of the Chekhov kind, which lives on the strength of its echoes.

Between these two poles of tendency—the professional slice-of-life to the North, the prose-poem to the South—the short-story world turns. So far as one can tell from the younger writers who are setting the pace, the trend (especially noticeable in Faber's *Introduction*) is away from the story that tells a story and moving strongly towards the illusion-conjuring and fantastic, short stories getting tall.

I don't know how general this is. Mr. Pudney's chosen ones are more conventional, less æsthetic in their pretensions; they represent the average-to-good standard of current short-story writing. The editor claims in his foreword that these entries reflected more spontaneous and imaginative writing, "liberated from the stodgy plot-building" that dominated things ten years ago. Admittedly one sign of this "liberation"—uncertain whether cause or effect—has been the folding-up of several of the magazines which offered a market to raconteurs and plot-builders.

But, reading through "Pick," I was not entirely convinced about that spontaneity. Gerda Charles contributes a good and effortless sketch of a Jewish character; and there are two others which score rather by their professionalism: J. A. Cross's story of a West Indian threatened by a bunch of Teds, which manages to be compact, gripping, and unponderous in its social implications; and a neat essay on suburban love-life by Thomas Clarke.

With a good many of the others there's a tone of capable orthodoxy, and not much sign of either that spark of personality or that all-American professionalism that brings a story to life. We've met them too often before, members of an old family which shows distinct signs of inter-breeding.

The sort of thing I mean is (a) the one that starts off with post-coital bedroom scene, lovers daringly smoking in bed, or else the chap is studying his partner in the shaving mirror, "and let his eyes follow the entire length of the bed, taking in the tautness where her breasts and knees and feet stretched the blanket"—the sort of over-conscious (I suggest) and unlikely statement which I find impossible to get past; or (b) the pseudo-Waleyan story about Chinamen, set in some permanent, conservative golden age; or (c) the story about the bog-Irishman looking for a wife; or (d) most varieties of the vernacular yarn in which the dialogue is just not accurate enough to be good fun; or (e) the Scotch-Welsh-Lancashire story in which the speech is so bowed down with apostrophes and eccentric spellings that it must have been written at the rate of about an inch a day, and you get past caring whether the phonetics are accurately rendered or not; and (f) stories set in foreign parts in which the local colour is the chief reason for our being there.

Then there is that other big component of the same tradition, the non-committal piece of atmosphere writing (kept down to one example in "Pick"), with technique part Hemingway, part cinema, part writer's uncertainty, a method handy enough for journalists but now become a bit shop-worn as serious writing.

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In style and often in content all these sorts of stories are very much the progeny of the 'thirties; but it seems to me that they have become a pale imitation of those earnest but lively pieces, right on the nerve of the time, that filled *New Writing*.

IF SOME revitalising of this sector of the short-story world is needed, you might suppose it would come from the more intimate and sympathetic approach to social realism now current in writers like Sillitoe, Delaney, and Wesker. But judging by the work of the six new writers of promise in Faber's *Introduction* there's also an un-realist movement in the offing. These stories are fresher, more original, uncoloured by any obvious influence or way of looking at things, though an English romantic-lyrical strain runs through a surprising number of them.

A. O. Chater's three stories, for instance, are attempts to revive the fairy-story for grown-ups. Influences: Kafka, Forster, de la Mare? The method is to isolate some flatly ordinary event, an archery contest, say, in some flatly ordinary rural spot and describe the proceedings—arguments over scoring, arrival of a stranger—in flat, circumstantial detail, so that a faint mist of enchantment is cast over the whole affair. Puzzling, I think, but piquantly flavoured and very interesting.

Ted Hughes, with fair success, tries some more purposeful myth-making in his three. A horse chases a man in a field on a wet day; a rat-catcher at work; a man lost for a lifetime in a blizzard: all manage to catch the calmness-with-terror mood of the dream dimension. The other stories, by Alan Coren, Jim Hunter, Jason McManus, Julian Mitchell, do not lean over quite so far towards the poet's country; but almost all prefer some kind of oblique, off-beat approach to social reality.

The stories from *Mademoiselle*, collected from the 1953–60 period, are not much help to the trend-hunter. They include examples from European writers as well as some of the best of the Americans; and, in both, the American qualities of concentration, punch, and professional know-how are richly illustrated. There are particularly good ones by Camus, Dan Jacobson, Elizabeth Enright, and Paul Bowles; and "The Man from Barcelona" by P. H. Newby—a writer very close in spirit to the new writers in Faber's collection—remains a brilliant example of how to tell the reader about one thing while staring hard in the opposite direction: the mood of the Spanish War, loneliness of an exile, a family history, all emerge from his intense study of an evening's ice-skating on an English pond.

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The interest of Eugene Ziller, and his main strength, is to show how far the good professional can relinquish the hint and the allusion in favour of the statement, almost the sermon. His commitment, obsession rather, is to the idea of human fraternity and the oddities and sombre ironies of its failure in practice.

A commercial traveller goes out of his way to help a hobo and is shot for his trouble. A married couple refuse to shelter a hoodlum-hunted neighbour. A stranded motorist in the desert is spurned by the locals. Ziller's situations and treatment have some of the forthright naïvety of parables. Not far below the surface of his work there is a suspicion of a sentimental vein, a risk of self-parody. But Ziller has enough genuine spirit to survive these things; and after a reviewer has worked through eighty-odd stories of the allusive-reticent kind, he finds no sin in a Ziller for being predictable, or for putting all his cards on the table.

Roy Perrott

Novels

The Old Men at the Zoo. By Angus Wilson. *Secker & Warburg*, 18s.

The Window. By Alasdair Clayre. *Jonathan Cape*, 16s.

The Minister. By Maurice Edelman. *Hamish Hamilton*, 16s.

I suppose that Mr. Wilson's most indisputable, if not his greatest, achievement has been the restoration of intelligence to a high place among the moral and literary virtues. The typical Wilson scene is one which requires as much quick-wittedness from the reader as it does from the characters, which is almost as exhausting to follow as it would be to take part in. The full significance of any action, or more often of any remark—whether calculated bitchery or casual indiscretion—is never allowed to drift by: anyone who could possibly take offence will do so, and anyone plunging in to create a diversion will be fully aware of all the pitfalls he must avoid. Stupidity or insensitivity never blunts—as it so often does in real life—the issue. In Mr. Wilson's world, everyone is a Real Princess.

One can be certain, therefore, that a new book of his will keep one intellectually stretched. One can also be certain that it will advance and illustrate a serious argument, and confident that it will start at least where one's own thinking on the subject stopped, and probably further. One can also expect its technical or factual basis to be enormously and accurately well-informed, not in the sense that all the details will have been looked up, but rather that there will be a display of constructive erudition, suggesting Flaubertian depths of research. One's mind, in fact, will have a good deal to bite on.

In all this, *The Old Men at the Zoo* runs true to form. Mr. Wilson has set his novel in the 1970s, and put Britain outside federated Europe (a background which he describes as "utterly improbable," but which he handles, until the end, perfectly plausibly); he has also created, with more obvious imaginative power, a world of administrative action which is familiar enough to convince, and fantastic enough to entertain. The struggle for power begins at the Director's desk and ends, as picturesquely as anyone could ask, in the bear-pit or the Reptile House. One could hardly have a more brilliant framework either for Mr. Wilson's talents or for his central theme—the exercise of authority—and he has good reason to be satisfied, even by his own high standards, with his achievement.

It is not, however, a faultless book. As usual, Mr. Wilson has so many points to make that some of them are rather rammed down our throats. In *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*, three possible ways of life open to the heroine were illustrated by sections involving three of her friends; one almost expected a scene-shifter with an explanatory chart. In this book, three possible attitudes to authority, and their respective nemeses, are presented by the liberal-minded Director, whose second Whipsnade is sacrificed between the millstones of public fear of escaped animals and the interests of the press-lord who is the Society's President; his reactionary Deputy and successor, whose neo-Victorian menagerie in Regent's Park goes down in a burst of outdated glory in a European war; and the narrator, the Zoo's administrator, who will serve under any régime until neo-Fascism follows war, bringing the proposal for fights between animals and political prisoners.

In the intervals of filling in such an ambitious triptych, as well as creating his usual distinctive minor characters (the unctuous Curator of the Insect House, the intolerable but attractive Keeper of Birds), Mr. Wilson has naturally not time to be too subtle about everything. But perhaps he has made too symmetrical an equation between his trio's public and private roles: the impotent authoritarian, the administrator using his wife almost literally as a receptacle for the

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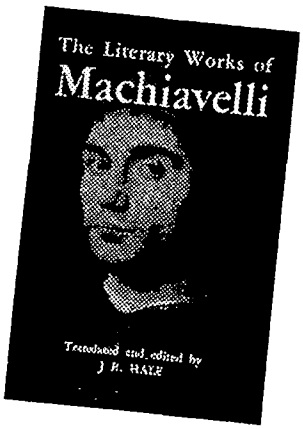

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frustrations and fatigues of his work. More interesting, and much more horrible, is the Director's inability to deal with his nymphomaniac daughter, who is eventually killed by her own dog under singularly unpleasant circumstances (all the animals in and out of Mr. Wilson's Zoo, like all the animal instincts in his would-be-civilised humans, are dangerous); since he cannot break these to his wife, their daughter is reported killed by an escaped wild beast and the Park is closed.

But liberal self-destruction has always been one of Mr. Wilson's themes; it is a pity he has not amplified the other two attitudes so well. It is surely unnecessarily pedagogic for the narrator to quote, as "my favourite lines of Pope," the tag about the best administered and the best. We can find our way without so huge a signpost. And though his sacrifice of field-work for office-work may be a revealing aspect of his career, it might come better in almost any form than by putting into his wife's mouth the improbable words "You were only the best naturalist on television when I married you." (Exclamations we doubt ever got exclaimed.) The skeleton of this book is so large that the bones sometimes show through the flesh; but only someone of Mr. Wilson's intellectual calibre could even have attempted to breathe life into it; and perhaps only he himself could have succeeded.

To have one's first novel published in the same week as Mr. Wilson's fourth would be an ordeal for anyone. I cannot think of more than four or five authors who would stand it as well as Mr. Clayre. *The Window* is an exciting and imaginative book, carefully thought out and beautifully written ("He looked across the rooftops, and along the line of windows, randomly lit up, dull yellow and black, like teeth in an old man's mouth"); an impressive synthesis of intellectual concern, emotional intensity, and sheer feeling for language and for place. Mr. Clayre takes six characters—a musician and his two sons (a batman in the Guards and a factory-hand in Portsmouth), a philosopher, his sister, and his mistress—and weaves their lives in and out of the moral issues raised by a movement called The Campaign of Youth for Human Regeneration, which goes on protest marches every year in the cause of aid to underdeveloped countries.

Mr. Clayre's Campaign, like Mr. Wilson's Zoo, seems to me to strike exactly the right balance between documentary and fantasy, and the to-and-fro between the supremely rational philosopher (and Mr. Clayre knows what he is talking about here) and his superficially more warm-hearted mistress produces fresh twists up to the last page. Like any first novelist, he has put too much in: six interior monologues is a bit much for anyone to handle, and at times they all speak too exactly the same idiom. The female characters in particular are sketchier than they should be: the musician's wife is a mere shadow with anti-maternal outlines, and the philosopher's sister is the conventional romantic's Innocent Woman, whose personality is not so much uncorrupted as non-existent.

But the generosity of incident and character (there is an excellent brief sketch of an unpredictably intelligent Guards Officer) represents more than youthful enthusiasm biting off more than it can chew. Like Miss Murdoch, with whom he has very obvious affinities, Mr. Clayre seems to be making a very conscious and much-needed effort to use the novel as a vehicle for morality rather than sensibility, for objective narrative which makes a pattern out of complexity rather than for the impressionistic display of a single (hero's or narrator's) personality. The one-dimensional novel, from Mrs. Woolf to Mr. Amis, has been so overplayed that even two dimensions come as a relief, and anyone who writes in three should be enthusiastically welcomed; though one cannot hope for many who do it as well as Mr. Clayre.

The denigration of best-sellers is one of the critic's standard blind alleys: the trumpet sounds loudly, and the walls of Jericho remain as much of a tourist attraction as ever. But it is perhaps worth commenting that the saddest thing about *The Minister* is that it could have been written by someone with no knowledge of politics at all. It expresses for statesmen what Mr. Hoggart once noted in journalists: a romantic infatuation with the seedy popular image of their own profession. With a knowing wink, Mr. Edelman tells us what it's *really* like; the result might have come out of *Reveille*. For political wisdom:

> And then in the Chamber, I thought the House was a bear-garden. And after that, I sometimes felt that it was like Versailles in the 18th century—a great court full of intrigue and hangers-on revolving around the sovereign.

These chaps clearly know their oats. Their standard of general culture is high, too.

> "Thank you," said Melville, taking a seat on the brocaded sofa. "Is that a Degas?"
>
> "No," she said. "It's a Forain. Their ballet dancers are often confused. You can tell the Forains, though, by all that burnt umber he uses on the left."

A best-seller, in fact, must not only tell us what

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we already know; it must reassure us that this knowledge is both adequate and important; we need no new ideas and no new information, only a conducted tour of our own clichés. *The Minister* gives us exactly this.

Francis Hope

Hominform

The Exile of Capri. By ROGER PEYREFITTE. *Secker & Warburg*, 18s.

THE latest book by Roger Peyrefitte is a slightly fictionalised biography, or alternatively a historical novel of a somewhat specialised sort, constructed about the life of a rich, French, homosexual poetaster by the name of Fersen who was born in 1880 and died of dope in 1923. Involved in a nasty scandal at an early age, he went to live on Capri (hence the title) where he built himself a luxurious villa and slept with his valet, to whom he wrote mediocre verses. He persuaded inverts more celebrated in the world of letters than himself to contribute prefaces to these forgotten volumes. (No less a man than Jean Cocteau of the Académie Française writes the preface to *this* book, but *honi soit qui mal y pense*.)

In the pretty little world of Capri Fersen was, of course, a celebrity, and since almost all rich people visit the island at some time or other, he met a great many of them and specifically almost everybody famous who was, or was believed to be, homosexual. If, to judge by this volume, he does not appear to have met anyone who wasn't, that may be because Peyrefitte has kept his eye firmly on one theme throughout. The result is a work of pseudo-history, or more exactly a *chronique scandaleuse*, of international, high-society perversion during the period of Fersen's life, with a footnote added to bring it up-to-date. Every scandal of the sort is brought out for an airing, from Verlaine, through Wilde, Krupp, Moltke, Douglas, to even more recent scandals. The result is not an obscenity, for what these poor, dead people did is only described in the most general terms. Rather does it resemble a huge Christmas bumper-number of *The News of the World*, written in a somewhat affected, pinkish French.*

As for libel, in this country there is no libelling the dead, though on the Continent it is otherwise, and Peyrefitte is being sued by the son of one of his characters. (But does he realise that Prince Felix Youssoupoff, a formidable man when he gets together with his libel lawyers, is still alive? He makes some very odd insinuations about the Prince's private life, but more than that he comes right out and says, on page 302, that he killed Rasputin. Saying just this cost a film company a fortune a few years ago.) As for the way he portrays the dead, I am not really in a position to judge, save for his picture of Norman Douglas, which is as silly as it is grotesque. He makes Douglas out to have been a sort of hanger-on of Fersen's, forever hurrying down to meet him when he arrived at the Grande Marina and chattering about something called the Uranism Service, an international homosexual intelligence network. Persons interested in Douglas's real attitude towards Fersen, whom he regarded as a rather endearing freak, are advised to read the note on him in *Looking Back*. Peyrefitte gives to his Fersen an apocalyptic end, in a kimono and a thunderstorm, worthy of Wilde's *Salomé* or Flecker's *Hassan*. In fact his death, according to Douglas, was far more banal. He dropped dead while lighting his after-dinner cigarette, though there was a thunderstorm later on.

Jean Cocteau says: *"Ce livre ne doit pas être lu sous l'angle du scandale,"* and such importance do the French publishers attach to this cryptic admonition that they have extracted it, printed it on crimson paper, and slung it about the book. But in that case, under what angle should it be read? Under what angle, come to that, should Peyrefitte's similar effusions about the papacy and the diplomatic corps be studied? There are two possible lines that the book itself suggests.

THE FIRST IS THE THEORY that there exists in fact a mauve international which wields immense power behind the scenes, and which is worthy of serious attention. This is not only implied, but actually stated in this book, in the matter of the French and German general staffs and diplomats during the *belle époque*. According to our

* The French edition (*L'Exilé de Capri*, Flammarion) contains a mass of mis-spellings and petty errors of fact. For a truer, and much more amusing, picture of Capri during the Fersen period, the reader is referred to Sir Compton Mackenzie's two novels, *Vestal Fire* and *Extraordinary Women*, to Norman Douglas's *Looking Back* and *Footnote on Capri*, and perhaps best of all to Dr. Edwin Cerio's *Aria di Capri*, translated, but I believe only privately printed, as *That Capri Air*. Although the island of Nepenthe in *South Wind* is partly modelled on Capri, that novel is not, as Peyrefitte maintains, a *roman à clef*.

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AESOP-TO-DATE

The travelling Kangaroo

A Kangaroo from Dublin Zoo,
A female of the species,
Was put inside a sort of ark
And shipped direct to Regents Park
Where every prospect pleases
But this marsupial had some doubt
If she would get her Guinness Stout,
And so she packed herself a few
Bottles of What is Good for You.

In England, when the Customs men
She failed to understand,
They searched her . . . ouch!
And in her pouch
They found the contraband.
Protesting was of little use
For ignorance is no excuse.

And so in future all beware,
When asked, "What have you to declare?"
Declare in accents loud and free—

Guinness
is good for you—and me
G.E.3627.C

author, senior officers and career diplomats of both countries were constantly going to bed with one another, and so great was their mutual understanding and love that had they not been unfortunately removed from office as the result of a series of scandals, and replaced by unimaginative hetero-sexuals, the war would never have occurred. It is an ingenious theory, and one that I do not remember encountering before in the numerous far-fetched explanations given for our century's first global catastrophe.

The second is the implied statement, which has been given far more explicitly elsewhere by other writers, that almost everyone, or at least everyone famous, is, was, and presumably will be a homosexual. (This has been maintained, though less vociferously, about Sadists, but not, so far as I know, about masochists, foot-fetishists, the rubber mackintosh people, et cetera. There is room for a number of best-sellers here.) This belief, to which some of the late 19th-century psychologists gave a spurious scientific approval with their misunderstood talk about bi-sexuality, was crystallised in André Gide's *Corydon* forty-one years ago. When it is objected that Goethe, say, or Mozart, or Oliver Cromwell do not *appear* to have been homosexuals, the answer is the purest dialectic: they were *really*, but they didn't know it.

Both these theories or fantasies are curiously evocative of "world-conspiracy" theories; but here it is the homosexuals themselves who maintain they wield a vast, mysterious power, and that everyone they like is really one of them.

So IF WE ARE to follow M. Cocteau's injunction, it would seem that we must study this type of literature as the protest of a minority. Professor Mario Praz, in his classic, *The Romantic Agony*, has said that two great figures loom over 19th-century literature, those of Sade and of Rousseau, that is to say the preachers of sexual and of social rebellion. The disinherited artist in a philistine bourgeois society sees the symbol of all he hates in the father-figure climbing into the connubial bed. Off with his head! Three cheers for the marquis! If there is hope, it must lie with the mauve international! It is an interesting theory, though how Browning or Melville or Mallarmé can be fitted into it is hard to grasp. But that it explains a great deal is obvious, and its heritage lingers on. Why, only a couple of years ago no less a critic than Lionel Trilling proclaimed in no less a magazine than ENCOUNTER that *Lolita* was a great work of art and even, so help us, a great love-story. Well, let it be said at once and in conclusion that *The Exile of Capri* is a very silly book indeed.

Constantine FitzGibbon

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Letter from Budapest

EARLY in my visit to Hungary last month, I met a man who said, "You will certainly see improvements and be aware of more liberty than on your last trip. But you will also, I hope, be aware that the Communist Party has got its clutches into the heart of Hungary more firmly than ever before—more even than in the time of Rakosi. . . ."

As this statement proved to be correct, on both scores, I repeated it at various interviews I had at the end of my stay with ministers and officials. One of them replied, "Yes, but it is unfortunately phrased. Please do not let us talk about 'getting clutches into the heart of Hungary.' Let us say that there has been an improvement in the situation, because the heart of the Hungarian people is more solidly behind us than it has ever been before."

Our metaphors may have become somewhat mixed, but even allowing for this, he is wrong. The people's "heart" is no more "behind the régime" than it was in Rakosi's day. They are simply thankful for certain concessions which have been granted them in the last four years, and they hope they will continue. Aware that the West will not help them, they are adapting themselves to the situation.

The general attitude is well summed up by Laszlo Nemeth, one of the finest living Hungarian writers, with whom I spent an evening. In Rakosi's time he was not allowed to publish anything, but his works are now appearing.

We kept off politics for the most part; but these, as far as I could gather, are his views:

"We Hungarians are living to-day in a huge new apartment block, which many people find ugly. It is unfinished, the bricks are showing, the plaster is missing. It became clear enough in 1956 that this apartment block cannot be demolished. While awaiting its completion, its transformation into something better, let us therefore busy ourselves with our own flats behind the façade. Let us make them, at least, as comfortable and habitable as we can."

In this approach to the Communist régime, Nemeth is tacitly supported by a number of other non-Communist writers—the poet Gyula Illyes (who wrote the famous inflammatory ode, *"One Sentence on Tyranny,"* during the 1956 Revolution); the novelists Aron Tamasi, Milan Füst, Lajos Kassak; the playwright Miklos Hubay, and a host of others who supported the aims of the revolution wholeheartedly, as many of their writings at the time in the famous *Irodalmi Ujsag* (the Literary Gazette) proved. When I was in Hungary in 1957, none of these people, some of whom were old friends, were prepared to see me. This time, I could call on them at their homes, and go where I pleased, if necessary visit them in the country. (It was summertime, and most of them were on Lake Balaton.) Nor did they appear embarrassed at talking to me. Only in the case of Tibor Dery, Julius Hay, and the men released from prison last year did I have any difficulty.

CONDITIONS HAVE CERTAINLY improved during the last five years but, as I hope to show, this is part of a long-term policy by which the régime aims, as my first friend expressed it, "at getting its clutches more firmly into the heart of Hungary." The Communists learned the lesson after 1953 that you cannot govern by terror alone—at least not for long. The concessions are carefully calculated and, in the case of some of them, the régime, with a bigotry worthy of Rakosi, firmly lays down, "thus far—and no further!"

If special importance is attached in this account to the writers of Hungary, it is because, apart from the great role they played in the 1956 Revolution (and indeed in all previous revolutions in this land), they have always been the most respected section of the community. Anyone who has established himself in Hungary, even in the most modest way, as a writer, has a greater standing among the entire population than any politician or practical man of affairs. They have none of the exaggerated respect we show towards our temporary rulers. It is as if the Hungarians have seen that the practical men of affairs have done them little good throughout their tragic history, and they turn away to something more permanent. This is particularly true to-day. Kadar, Münnich, Marosan, and the others who govern Hungary to-day are not so much disliked for their Russian affiliations as looked upon as nonentities—compared with Dery, Illyes, Nemeth, Hay, Tamasi, the lyrical poet Sandor Weöres, and a host of other authors who are busy writing again.

IN A POOR country, where there is not much to spend money on, literature means a great deal and books are cheap. The Hungarians have always been quick to spot "real writers" and distinguish them from those who obtain their reputation through governmental influence. There is still no shortage of this second kind of author. Thus, the novelist Bela Illes, a Government man if ever there was one (he came back from Russia in 1945 wearing a Russian officer's uniform), still has his books published in tens of thousands of copies, but his sales are poor; whereas the books of Laszlo Nemeth, which have been published in the last five years, are sold out almost immediately. Everyone knows that Nemeth, owing to his great reputation in 1945, was asked to become an honorary member of the Party (a post carrying with it a

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highly-paid professorship at the University of Budapest). He refused, preferring to go as a small schoolteacher to the provinces, barely earning a living for his large family. As a result of this "refusal to collaborate in the building of socialism" he could not publish any books for six years.

Now, this sixty-year-old essayist, novelist, and playwright—who has been called a kind of Hungarian Aldous Huxley—has just published his new set of essays, *Sajkodi Estek* (*Evenings at Sajkodi*; Sajkodi is a village he retires to regularly on Lake Balaton). The five thousand copies were gone in a week. It contains an important essay showing that the socialist Utopia can never be achieved, but that the transformation of "Communist life" into "human life" is possible. Another essay is in the form of a directive to the youth of Hungary telling them not to try to change things again. Only a world upheaval, he says, can achieve this; and this, to-day, is unthinkable. "Use what you have!" seems to be his motto.

This book was severely criticised two months ago in the Party newspaper *Nepszabadsag*, but no attempt has been made to ban it, nor does this seem likely under the present conditions. The régime is biding its time, believing that in ten, twenty, or even thirty years, these difficult, older writers will have passed on, and their successors will have become indoctrinated enough to be more amenable.

To sum up the present situation of the Hungarian writers. If—as a Pole told me when I was in Warsaw a year ago—"Poland is run to-day by two men in direct opposition to one another, equally powerful, but respecting one another's power, Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski," one might strain this obvious exaggeration a little further, and say that in Hungary to-day the Government too has its Wyszynski, in the form of the writers. In October, 1956, Gomulka found he could not govern for long unless he recognised the Cardinal who had, until then, been silenced, in prison. In the same way, in the years after 1956, Kadar, too, has found that he cannot govern unless he recognises the men who also were silenced during the Rakosi régime, the Hungarian writers.

Ambiguous Answers

Perhaps the cleverest writer in Hungary to-day is Gyula Illyes, whom I tracked down at his summer cottage on the Balaton. By reading between the lines of his ambiguous answers much can be learned. This man, of peasant origin, who wrote the brilliant "Socialist" novel in the 'thirties, *People of the Puszta*, has always succeeded brilliantly in *just* managing to keep in with the régime in power (including Horthy's), while at the same time opposing, or appearing to oppose, it. (I stress *just* because he has, at certain moments since 1930, been very near to disaster.) He has a witty face, lively mobile eyes, and a good-humoured, continuously ironical expression. His method with me was to contradict everything I said, but in a most pleasant manner. When I said I thought things had improved in Hungary since my last visit, he wagged his finger wisely, implying ignorance of real conditions on my part. On the other hand when, trying another gambit, I repeated my friend's phrase that the régime "had got its clutches into the heart of the Hungarian people more than in the Rakosi days," he again registered ironical disagreement. If I had said we were sitting at a table in his summer house, he would have tried to prove that I was wrong, that the table was really a chair; nor was the summer house really a summer house.

This clever man's poems are eagerly awaited because, while appearing entirely lyrical, generally about nature, they contain subtle innuendoes which everyone recognises, but against which the régime does not wish to act. Paraphrasing one of the most recent: "It is dark now, and sombre on the water. But one day the light will come, and the boat will go out into clear water. Then the voyage will continue unrestricted. . . ."

Against this poem, one of the Ministers made a speech, protesting indignantly that "It is not dark now." Since Rakosi's time, he said, "light" has come. Some officials would have liked to ban the poems, but Kadar, realising how ridiculous this would make them all, intervened. In another of these poems, an earlier one, Illyes wrote about concrete. Now, everyone in Hungary knows (they have almost been forced to know it) Lenin's famous statement, that "Communism is like concrete, as indestructible and monolithic." Illyes, in his poem, shows a piece of concrete splitting. Why, he asks, does this powerful material split? The answer is: "A small plant, a bush, a tree growing up underneath, searching for the light, can do it." Illyes's poems written since 1956 reveal a black pessimism which scarcely endears him to the régime, but they have to print him. His latest volume of poems appeared in the shops while I was in Hungary and was quickly sold out.

If Illyes uses these innuendoes, he also knows how, at the right moment, to gain governmental approval, as he did recently with his poem about Gagarin. In short, this clever man has created a special position for himself in the country. The ministers and officials smile wanly when you mention his name and nod their heads and say, "Well, well, all poets are a little mad after all, aren't they?"

Illyes, Nemeth, Tamesi, these writers whom I was able to see, are what might be called "the secondary resisters," men who supported the ideals of the revolution, but who did nothing which could land them in gaol in 1956. The "first resisters," Dery, Hay, Zelk, etc., were, as everyone knows, released from prison only last year, after a world outcry against their sentences. They took an active part in the revolution, if only with the pen, and are in quite a different category from the "secondary resisters." To begin with they were Communists. Whereas Illyes, Nemeth, and the others have never been party members, and have been allowed to publish in a limited way since 1956, these men have not been allowed to print anything. Dery wrote a novel in prison, but it is said to be full of such "black Kafkaesque pessimism" that it is unlikely to be published.

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I TRIED TO SEE Dery, who was also holidaying on the Balaton, but I was told that he "did not wish to meet foreigners." Government officials said they would welcome his meeting Westerners, but they had to respect his wishes. This may well be true. Garbled accounts of interviews by Westerners have occurred before, and Dery does not want any more trouble. He now appears to be making a reasonable living by translating, but he has, I was assured by officials, been told that he will shortly be able to publish his own work. (It is said of Dery ironically in Budapest that "he is the only man to-day in Hungary who still believes in Communism." The officials who put him in gaol have long lost their belief, and view it quite cynically, in terms of power politics. But Dery is still something of a Tolstoyean idealist.)

Guardian radical Gyorgy Lukacs, the greatest living Hungarian philosopher, is also an honorary member, as it were, of the Dery group. He took an active part in the revolution, in that he was a minister in Imre Nagy's short-lived government in October, 1956. But Kadar did not imprison him. Instead, he lost his professorship, and is now confined in his flat in Budapest, in a kind of house arrest, where he sees very few people. He is said to be completing a large work on Marxism, but it will be very much Marxism *à la* Lukacs, "the Marxism," as someone put it to me, "of a *Manchester Guardian* radical." For this reason, his works since 1956 have been published only abroad, in West Germany, and not in Hungary; but his latest book, *Characteristics of Aesthetics*, is, I was assured by Ferenc Erdei (the deputy director of the Academy of Sciences),[1] about to be published in Hungary. In spite of this, Lukacs has been severely criticised, as recently as February, 1961, in the party ideological journal, *Tarsadalmi Szemle*:

> Loyal to the socialist ideology, many critics and literary historians have criticised the revisionist æsthetical views of Gyorgy Lukács and his followers, the nationalist views of the "populist" writers, and the irrational decadent trends which cloak their bourgeois views in so-called "modernism."

Whether his book will be published or not remains to be seen.

The most distinguished Hungarian who is still in gaol is Istvan Bibo, the professor of law, who committed in Communist eyes the greatest sin of all, greater even than that of Dery or Lukacs, or even the sin of being a "fascist reactionary." In a public letter to the world, in December, 1956, he advocated a "Third Way" for Hungary, by which the country would be in neither the Capitalist nor the Communist blocs, but rather would be a kind of neutral state between the two, an India or a Sweden. It is easy to understand why this is such a "heresy." Capitalism, Fascism, the return of the landowners, Cardinal Mindszenty, or whatever you care to call the various forms of "reaction," do not present, the Government is well aware, much danger, because the overwhelming mass of people have little sympathy with any of these philosophies or personalities. But Bibo's ideas received—and would receive to-day—almost universal approval. Although, if put into effect, they would not resurrect Capitalism, they would mean the end of Communism on the Russian model. For this terrible heresy he is still paying the price.

The general impression I obtained from the writers I met is that few of them are now in prison; Bibo, Oberzsovsky,[2] Merei, and Livan appear to be the only ones whose names are well known to the public. Of course there are plenty of other political prisoners still; estimates vary beween five thousand and ten thousand.

IT SHOULD NOT BE SUPPOSED from these relaxations that the régime has changed its views about literature, nor moved an inch from the orthodox Marxist-Leninist dogma about literature's "social function." The authorities are simply handling the writers more flexibly, and allowing a certain amount of Western reading matter to enter the country. It is generally agreed in Budapest that this "liberalisation" is of Russian rather than Hungarian origin. Since 1956, the Russians have recommended more concessions in Hungary than in the other satellites (with the exception, of course, of Poland); and the Hungarian leaders are watching the situation carefully, even suspiciously. They remember what, in their opinion, Nagy's "June road of 1953" led to—in 1956. As a further proof of this essentially Russian influence towards liberalisation—on November 7th, 1960, the Russians, for the first time, invited Nemeth and Illyes and other writers, none of whom were Communists but who were ex-populists, to their annual October revolution reception at the Soviet Embassy. Also, the Russian film, *A Clear Sky*, has been shown in Budapest—but on Russian premises. It is an outright attack on Stalinism. It tells of a Russian soldier who was captured by the Nazis in 1943 after fighting bravely; for this "sin" he was put in a concentration camp after his repatriation in 1945. As there is a time lag of many months in Budapest on anything that happens in Moscow, the Hungarian authorities feel that the time has not yet come for this film to be generally released in their cinemas, and it was shown only on Russian premises.

IT IS ENOUGH to quote a few passages from the official literary weekly, *Elet es Irodalom*

[1] Mr. Erdei was Minister of State in Imre Nagy's October 1956 Government. He was arrested after the suppression of the Revolution, but spent only some days in custody, and is now, as his important post shows, very much in the Government's good graces. I mention this because there are many men with this sort of history who are now in high posts.

[2] This brave man is still suffering for his courage. After November 4th, 1956, when all other newspapers had ceased to exist, he went on publishing his paper *Justice* and distributing it, under the very noses of the Russian troops, until it was forcibly suppressed on November 7th.

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(*Life and Literature*), to reveal that the "liberalisation" I have spoken of is limited.[3]

Although modern Western books are now being printed in translation, there is an attack on them in *Elet es Irodalom*, as recently as June 27th, 1961. In an article about "a debate on books from world literature translated into Hungarian" the Europa publishers, who publish them, are taken to task:

> Forty-two public librarians objected to the fact that the Europa Publishing Company have been publishing decadent and morbid books from the capitalist world, such as the works by Asturias, Calvino, J. Joyce, Koeppen, and Pavese.

A more illuminating criticism, this time of Yugoslavia for its "Western approach to literature," is delivered in the same paper (July 1st, 1961) by Geza Molnar, party secretary of the Writers' Union. He describes his recent trip to Belgrade, where he had long talks with the Yugoslav writers:

> I returned with the impression that there is nobody to influence the writers and literature in Yugoslavia. No principles, no ties, are imposed on them, everybody works and creates according to his own tastes and intentions.... The Party and State interfere in no respect whatsoever in artistic matters. There was not much understanding between us. We realised we were speaking two different languages. Our views are fundamentally different from theirs. Ideologically and principally, we cannot accept anything at all from them...."

This is meant to be a sharp criticism of the Yugoslav writers! He goes on:

> Whereas in Hungary there are, fortunately, on the boards directing the publishing houses, functionaries and activists who have taken part in guerrilla fights and party work.... Our literary situation is somehow more under control, it is more organised and held together better.

In the party ideological journal *Tarsadamli Szemli* (February, 1961) is a long article entitled *Some Deficiencies in Literary Criticism*, by the Work Committee on the Theory of Culture in the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party" (*i.e.*, from the very fountain-head of power), which concludes: "We must supervise the activities of the cultural section of *Nepszabadsag* more, of the radio, television, et cetera.... We must strive to educate the taste of the public."

In the 29th July, 1961, number of *Elet es Irodalom*, Maria Juhaz reveals the aims of the régime in the field of literature and also, with remarkable frankness, the difficulties they are encountering now that a number of modern Western books are allowed in Hungary.

> In the years following 1956, Hungarian literature was subjected to a foreign ideology, namely, the morbid nature of Western bourgeois literature.... It is no easy task to decide what kind of material to give to the public. Nor is it easy to present bourgeois literature to the readers with the adequate critical notes. We must provide them with the necessary information while, at the same time, giving them the critical tools with which they will be able to safeguard themselves against the infection of bourgeois thought....

Then comes this interesting admission:

> A no less important task for us is to spread the sphere of influence of socialist, primarily Soviet literature. For there is no getting away from the fact that even to-day not everything is in order when it comes to the reception of Soviet literature. It is a known fact that the sectarian principle of using literature solely for the purpose of advancing daily political aims has done damage to the good name of Soviet literature. It was praised to the skies when it should not have been. Mediocre, in fact inferior, works were glorified if they happened to serve the daily political trend. The bad effect of this tendency can be felt in recent times, when we have been able to arouse only a mild interest in what are really eminent Soviet literary productions. Confidence has been shaken and, however objective the Hungarian critics may be in this respect, the public gives them credence only with difficulty.

These euphemisms contain, if carefully examined, the most tell-tale admissions and revelations.

She goes on to regret that such a good story as Sholokhov's *Human Destiny*, and the film based on it, were neglected recently in Hungary simply because they came from Russia. (I have seen the film myself, and I can agree with her about its excellence; but can she really—after the well-known events in Budapest in November, 1956—be surprised if the Hungarians still refuse to see anything good in anything Russian?)

It is Mr. Gyula Csak who in *Elet es Irodalom* March 31st, 1961) really describes the problem facing "Communist literature" in Hungary to-day. "The writers of the newest generation," he says, "have broken away from the traditions of living literature. They all cook up the same soup. Using an expression taken from sports, they feel the lack of experienced trainers...."

THE FIRST SENTENCE is the Communist *cri de cœur*. The "writers of the newest generation" he refers to are the young proletarians and peasants of literary talent, the poets Ferenc Juhasz and Laszlo Nagy, and others whom the régime "discovered" in the late 'forties, and on whom it lavished aid in the form of grants and scholarships. Juhasz is generally looked upon as the most talented young poet Hungary has produced since Attila Josef. In

[3] Because *Elet es Irodalom*, when it first appeared in 1957, was said to contain "neither Life nor Literature," it was known to the literary public simply as *es*, meaning "and." Still to-day, if you ask any of the old women in charge of the bookstalls in the streets of Budapest for *"es,"* they will, with an absolutely straight face, hand you *Elet es Irodalom*.

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his early work, he was the ideal young Communist poet, writing about the lives and problems of agricultural workers. But when he became aware of what was going on around him in Rakosi's Hungary, he began to change, and he wrote an epic on the Tartar invasion which could not be published owing to its topical innuendoes. His poem *The Prodigal Country* (a land which kills its own children) became a kind of Bible to the young revolutionaries of 1956: it is about the peasants' revolt of 1540 (but, again, full of topical innuendoes). After the revolution, Juhacz had a nervous breakdown and spent some months in a mental hospital.[4] I met Juhasz on two occasions in Budapest and found him recovered, but he is still not publishing, and has certainly not returned to the Party fold. He knows no foreign languages, which is a serious handicap for a Hungarian writer to-day, as he is unable, after the manner of most Hungarian writers, to earn a living by translating.

This Communist *cri de cœur* calling to its lost children is echoed by Darvas, the president of the Writers' Union, in a speech to the Union on February 27th, where he refers to these "silent" young writers. "I consider," he says, "that the temporary absence of Ferenc Juhasz and Laszlo Nagy is a very grave problem."

BUT THE PARTY is handling these young renegades as carefully as it handles Nemeth and the older writers, hoping somehow that one day they may return to the fold that gave them birth. Some of these young, once Communist, writers have even become infected with Western ideas. On May 5th, 1961, *Elet es Irodalom* published a long article by Bela Kopeczi, the head of the State publishing department, on the appearance of Existentialism in Hungary. After a dissertation on Sartre, he examines the works of a number of young Hungarian writers who are influenced by Sartre and Heidegger.

His article is sober and balanced, very different from the onslaught which would have been delivered in Rakosi's time. In particular, he discusses the works of younger writers like Ferenc Juhasz, Geza Ottlik (author of the popular *School on the Border*, published in 1959), Magda Szabo, Gyula Hernadi, and a number of others; he examined them critically, but not necessarily unfavourably. All these writers are Existentialist in that "they regard man as an isolated individual developing according to his own rules." Magda Szabo, author of one of the best recent novels, *The Deer* (which is to be published in England), reveals "fatalism in her work. Her heroes destroy themselves like the heroes of Camus. . . ." Geza Ottlik's work is based on the highly un-Marxist adage that "our civil life is a vacation in the summer." Then there is Hernadi, whose books reveal the general cynicism prevailing throughout Hungary in the years immediately after 1956. He gets rapped on the knuckles for his depression and is now, I am told, having difficulty in getting anything printed.

In short, all these young writers who should, after twelve years of Communist indoctrination, be sound Marxists—regarding the writer not as an individual, but as a member of a team concerned with communal welfare and progress—reveal these "decadent" Western influences. The "Existentialism" which Mr. Kopeczi sees in them does not seem, by modern Western standards, particularly *avant-garde*. It is simply that these young writers are pro-Western in style and feeling and they have, after so many years of Party control, now been given their head.

The point, I think, about Mr. Kopeczi's interesting article is that it has been written at all, although of course he proves in the end that these writers are on the wrong track, and he knows they will see their error.

Young Writers

AGAIN, WE FIND in a "Debate on the Young Writers" this sad confession by the committee of the Writers' Union (*Elet es Irodalom*, December 30th, 1960):

> We all so often come across cases where young writers grapple with important social problems, but due to their ideological unpreparedness they treat it in a non-realist spirit and commit serious political mistakes. In other cases, the strong habit of imitating Western methods and attitudes spoils a well-intended effort. In other authors, we can see the corrupting influence of Existentialism and other morbid Western bourgeois philosophical trends. (Gyula Hernadi and Istvan Csurka.) Most of these are discarded by the readers, but our editors could give plenty of examples. Frequently we find detrimental revivals of harmful traditions in the works of modern writers. . . .

It is only fair to add that writers of any judgment laugh at these instructions which are regularly doled out to them by papers like *Elet es Irodalom*; and with them laughs most of the reading public. Indeed, when at a dinner party given for me where a number of writers (some of whom were Communists) were present, I read out Mr. Geza Molnar's criticism of the Yugoslav writers, and asked for clarification on the meaningless phrase I had found in *Elet es Irodalom* (July 8th, 1961)—"Most of the Hungarian writers have not yet reached the point of ebullition where they meet with reality"—everyone roared with laughter, and one man said, amid general acclaim, "Mr. Rhodes, I think you are the only person in Hungary to-day who reads *Elet es Irodalom*!" Yet many of the men around the table who laughed with him contribute to it! Presumably for a livelihood. One has the feeling among these writers that it is non-U—if one may use such a term in Hungary—to approve of the official literary attitude; yet at the same time one must somehow work with it. (Contrast this with the Rakosi times,

[4] The revolution and its aftermath is still felt among these young writers. Even to-day, talented young writers like Imre Sarkadi and Janos Szibor have had nervous breakdowns which have led recently to suicide.

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when it was not only non-U to laugh at such pronouncements, it was a form of suicide.)

It does appear, however, that *Elet es Irodalom* has improved considerably in the last year under the new editorship of Miklos Szabolcsi, and it would be unfair to say that all its articles are as bigoted as Molnar's. (Which reveals incidentally how distant Hungary and Yugoslavia still are from one another, much farther apart than we in the West imagine.)

MANY OF THE WRITERS I talked to had been members of the Party before 1956, but they had not rejoined, although invited to do so. They told me that they can now earn a living without it. Before 1954 they had to join the Party —in order to live. Now this is not necessary.

That a certain relaxation has been allowed, not only to the authors of repute, but also among the more popular brand of writer is also evident. In the bad old days before 1956 of the "cultural dictator," Revai, no modern Western *kitsch* —detective stories, American musicals, etc.—were permitted. To-day, owing to the efforts of the writers, as well as to the clamour of popular opinion, a number of these "decadent" Western features are allowed. There are some curious parallels with popular writing and journalism in the West. The women's weekly, and the magazine *Orsag Vilag*, now have a writer called "clever Kate" who deals effusively with emotional problems of harassed females (a kind of Hungarian Godfrey Winn) but she solves them, of course, in the proper Communist way, rather than by recourse to God or the example of our Royal Family. This type of writer has always seemed to me so English as to be almost unexportable, and I was amazed to find her here in 1961.

Then there is Klara Feher who is immensely popular, with her vaudevilles, a kind of female Noel Coward, combining sentiment, dainty ditties, and a furtive suggestion of sex, with enormous success, not only in Hungary but in Russia, Poland, and the other satellites. Being a convinced Communist from the early days has, of course, helped her. When I met her, she was off on a prolonged holiday tour with her husband, to Russia, France, Italy—on their own, of course, and in a smart new car. Such a woman earns a fortune.

Then there is Laszlo Passuth, whom I spoke to in his new house at Tihany on Lake Balaton. His historical works *à la Dumas* are now immensely popular, as they were before 1949. During the Rakosi period he was not allowed to publish, because the cultural dictator considered his writing *kitsch*. He is now in full swing again, and when I met him he was engaged on an historical novel about the life of Velasquez. This likeable and charming man may not be in the same category as writers like Nemeth or Illyes, but he suffered in silence from 1949 to 1956, and is now, I am glad to say, making an excellent living, entirely by the once despised historical novels. The same can be said for the old blind writer Gyorgy Szanto, a witty and delightful man whom I met in his house. His popular historical novels, condemned under Revai, are now on sale and in constant demand.

Then there is an entirely new kind of popular writer, a phenomenon which has appeared since 1956, Andreas Berkesi, a former A.V.O. colonel, who took to the pen after the revolution. He writes novels about the revolution, but from an A.V.O. point of view (Percy F. Westerman yarns, one might call them), full of cloak-and-dagger situations, sinister Western agents, romantic and midnight frontier-crossings. His heroes are pure, honest, decent Communists, who finally triumph over the clever, lying, treacherous Westerners.

Crime fiction is published too. Before 1956, people used to pay large sums on the black market for Agatha Christie, Simenon, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Ian Fleming, etc. These "forbidden" books feverishly did the rounds from house to house. But now that a series of them is on the market, the demand seems to have diminished; and the venture was described to me by its founder, Mr. Istvan Vas, the well-known poet and translator of Shakespeare, as having been something of a commercial flop. Whether this is simply because "forbidden fruits are sweeter," or because the detective yarns are deliberately highly priced, one cannot say. But it at least shows greater understanding of human psychology on the part of the régime.

I have mentioned this so-called *kitsch* element to show that a greater variety of reading and theatrical matter is also available to-day in Hungary. Frequently, when I turned on the Budapest radio, I found myself listening to American jazz. And while I was in Budapest a reader published a request in the *Magyar Nemzet* agony column for "any books on Dadaism, Futurism, Cubism, any form of modernism." Another advertised for "Cronin and Bromfield." This was severely criticised in the press (*Elet es Irodalom*, May 26th, 1961); but no one would have dared to advertise in this way in Rakosi's day.

Drama and Film

IN THE THEATRE and film world, a surer form of control can be exercised than over individual poets and prose writers. Every theatre is supposed to produce six plays a year. Of these, two must be new Hungarian plays; two must come from the Soviet Union or the other Peoples' Democracies; one or two must be classics; and one, perhaps, may come from the West. It is easy enough to find the classics or modern Western plays, several of which have been put on recently with great success. (John Osborne and Friedrich Dürrenmatt are approved Western playwrights.) The trouble is to turn out the Hungarian plays on approved themes. Often the theatrical producer, at his wits' end towards the end of the season, will get a number of playwrights together and say, "For God's sake, you know we've got to produce something on Hungarian Collective! We're running behind schedule!"

Then they all work feverishly, in the Hollywood manner, one writing a scene here, another a scene there, and finally something is cobbled up. That the Hungarian theatre still has these difficulties

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due to arbitrary dictation of subjects and themes is confirmed in *Elet es Irodalom* (July 8th, 1961), where Peter Bogati complains, "There is no doubt that to produce eighty per cent more rather than twenty per cent new Hungarian plays requires much thought, preparation, work, and skill." And I heard of one poor theatrical producer (admittedly, he was hardly qualified for the post as he was an army officer) who recently collapsed under the strain and is now in a lunatic asylum.

This "cobbling" method is reputed to have functioned in the production of Darvas's recent widely-publicised play *Dawn Fire* (Darvas, an old admirer of Revai, is now president of the Writers' Union). It is about a peasant trying to organise a co-operative farm with a rich brother who does not want to co-operate. The rich brother burns his barn and sells all his goods. But in the end all turns out well; he sees the truth and joins up.

Another playwright who has been successful since the revolution and made his name is Lajos Mesterhazi, who has produced a number of plays about the revolution—but seen from Kadar's point of view. He has considerable talent; his plays are useful propaganda, and they have been widely played in Russia and the other satellite countries. Mesterhazi has done so well out of them that he has been able to buy a fine house in the Var, once the aristocratic quarter of Buda. His recent play, *The Eleventh Commandment*, is about a naïve but honest socialist, mesmerised by "counter-revolutionary propaganda," who finds the true Socialist road in the end.

The Tancsics Group

AFTER THE 1956 revolution, a group of Stalinists appeared in literature—as they did in all other walks of Hungarian life—called after a Communist leader at the end of the last century, Tancsics. This Tancsics *kor*, or group, existed for about two years, until they were disbanded by Kadar, and they are now living in the wilderness. (They correspond roughly to the Molotov-Kaganovich group of extremists in Russia who duelled unsuccessfully with Khrushchev in 1957.) These were the men who wanted to continue the old Party line and allow no "decadent" Western literature into the country. They were against, for instance, the monthly magazine which is now so popular, *Nagyvilag* (*Wide World*), which prints articles of literary merit by foreign writers, particularly Westerners. When they were told that the magazine, which had started in 1956, was to continue after the revolution, they did their best to persuade the editorial staff not to print good articles from the West, but rather "Western trash."

"After all," they said, "the West is rotten and decadent. Let our readers see it. If you print T. S. Eliot, you must also print a part of *Forever Amber*."

The editorial staff replied that their funds for buying Western articles were limited; they intended to get only the best. This perhaps explains why *Nagyvilag* is such a success, and is sold out soon after it appears. Its circulation, beginning with two thousand in 1956, has mounted to eight thousand five hundred and, if more paper were allowed, it could be doubled to-morrow.

While I was in Budapest the first translation of Marcel Proust to appear since the war was published. Early one morning I saw a queue outside a bookshop. The bush-telegraph news had gone round that fifteen thousand copies of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* were being put on the market. Why, I asked, this queuing? (Which, I later learned, was taking place outside all the bookshops selling Proust.) If the book sold out immediately, as it did, then presumably the authorities would reprint? It was surely a good commercial proposition? No, I was told, it didn't work like that. Everyone knew that Proust would not appear on the market again for many years. This concession to a public anxious to read "decadent bourgeois literature" was a limited one.[5] It also reveals, in a startling manner, how considerations of supply and demand, profit and loss, can mean so little in Communist economy.

Another form of concession granted (and then retracted) to Western-minded Hungarians, is the tacit consent now given to the existence of the British Reading Room in the British Legation building. Nothing of this kind has existed since the British Council closed in Rakosi's time. A year ago, the British authorities opened this reading-room which, besides providing a library from which English books can be borrowed, has all the current English newspapers and periodicals; it also has a small cinema where English films are shown. But if you go into the reading room in the morning, you will find it patronised chiefly by elderly people. Younger Hungarians who have recently visited it have been questioned on their way home by the police, quite politely and civilly. They have simply been asked to show the identity card which every Hungarian has to carry on him. The name is noted, and that is all. They hear no more of it. But this is enough to deter many of them from further visits.[6]

Here we have another instance of the limited or controlled nature of the liberal measures being introduced. The authorities are aware that for every liberal measure they grant, more will be demanded. And, as Geza Molnar's article quoted above shows, they are determined that things shall not go as far as they have in Yugoslavia or, for that matter, in Poland.

A YOUNG MAN who is now courageously trying to make his living as a writer and has refused to join the Communist Party, summed up the situation

[5] A further example of the popularity of Western literature is seen in Miklos Vajda's *Anthology of English Poets*, "from Beowulf to James Kirkup," which came out last Christmas, 1960. Its fifteen thousand copies were sold out within a week.

[6] Since Dery's release from prison in 1960, English papers and periodicals, such as *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The London Magazine*, can be found in certain municipal libraries, where they are widely read. Dery's release may be looked upon as the turning-point in this concession.

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very well for me. He said, "Before 1954 a writer, if he wanted to make a living, had to satisfy two requirements, *in this order of importance*: (1) To receive the benediction of the Party, and (2) to receive the approval of the public. Now the same things are true, but the order is reversed. You cannot achieve the first unless you have achieved the second."

To this extent, then, things are better to-day for the writers in Hungary than they were in Rakosi's time—but not, we should always remember, better than they were in that year of ferment before the revolution, in the great days of *Irodalmi Ujsag*.[7]

Visual Arts

OF THE VISUAL ARTS there is less to say because the artists were less involved than the writers in the events of 1956. They too have obtained somewhat easier conditions, although not as liberal as those of the writers. I talked at the writers' home near Visegrad with the old jack-of-all-the-arts, Lajos Kassak, "the Apollinaire of Hungary," writer, designer, poet, and the first abstract painter in Hungary (he was painting Expressionist pictures during the first world war). He is a little gnome of a man, with very long hair, full of witty repartee, an "old socialist." When I asked him if socialist-realism was less in evidence in Hungary to-day, he put on a blank, childlike expression and said, "What is socialist-realism? I've never heard of it." He said that for seven years his work could not appear before the public; but now it is being shown and printed on a limited scale. For the other artists he could not say; he did not know them. He could only say how things were better for himself.

I also saw the famous Beni Ferenczy in his house in Buda. As a result of a stroke in December, 1956 (caused, I was told, by the sight of the post-revolution damage in Pest), he has lost the use of his right hand; but his most recent sculpture, done entirely with the left hand is, to my mind, among his finest work.[8] I later learned that only recently could his famous statue of the warrior-poet Petöfi be shown in a public museum (and then only in the provinces). It was done in 1948, a tragic portrait representing the poet less as a champion of the proletariat (as he has always been viewed by the Party) than as a human being, rather aristocratic, with a court side-sword, frail and noble. But there he is, at last on public view.

In conversation with other painters I heard much cynicism. One man, an old and respected artist, said, "If you paint what *they* want, in the way *they* want, you can earn a fortune. My advice to parents with a boy who can draw and doesn't mind much what he does is—make your boy a painter! It's as good as going on to your British Stock Exchange or Lloyds. He can't go wrong, unless of course he tries to paint."

A young *avant-garde* painter whom I met, Tibor Scernus, still has difficulty in showing his work, I was informed (I was not told this by the painter himself). Against this it must be added in fairness that he has recently been allowed to spend a year in Paris, "the home of bourgeois art." Another painter with whom I had an interview was Czobel, an elderly man who also spends half the year in Paris. To my amazement, he told me that he had been doing this annually for years—even throughout the entire Rakosi period! And his work is far from the socialist-realist ideal. (I later learned that he has a brother who has for decades been a "high orthodox Communist ideologist" in Moscow, where he was a friend of Stalin.)

ABOUT MUSIC there is less to say. Zoltan Kodaly is the greatest man in Hungary and he can do anything he likes. At the age of eighty-two he has just married again (a girl of eighteen). The story in Budapest is that he has done this simply to have an heir, so that his fortune may not be taken by the State when he dies. His musical editors are still Boosey & Hawkes in London, through whom all his royalties pass, to the irritation of the Hungarian authorities. He is in a special position. But other composers—for instance Lajos Lajtha, generally recognised as among the first three composers in Hungary—are still having difficulty in getting their new compositions played, on account of their well-known political views.

Generally speaking, the situation of the other arts is less favourable than that of the writers. This is most unusual in a totalitarian country, where writers can do more political damage, and are accordingly put in the tightest of the straitjackets. That the painters, sculptors, and musicians should not have so much freedom is another tribute, if a negative one, to the writers, who have fought so hard for their present position.

IN SPITE of, or should one say because of, the revolution, there is more free speech in Hungary to-day than in any other Eastern European country except Poland. Yet the Hungarians are by no means satisfied with what they have obtained. They know that beneath the surface of this "liberalism," security measures are as stringent as ever. An English journalist who was here two months ago was so impressed by "not seeing any secret police about," that he wrote in his paper that they had ceased to exist. I mentioned this to some Hungarian friends; they roared with laughter.

The A.V.O., or the new A.V.O. one may call it, operates just as effectively, but in a different way. In Rakosi's day, the bell would ring at five a.m.,

[7] This literary magazine keeps up its tradition in exile, and is published to-day in London.

[8] There is an interesting article on him in the September 1960 number of the *New Hungarian Quarterly* which is written in English, exclusively for world distribution. Those wishing to obtain an idea of good Hungarian writing should read it; it is produced in impeccable English. To the valid objection that it has a certain propaganda aim, I would reply that as it also contains non-political articles, and short stories, by such writers as Nemeth, Illyes, Tamasi, the poet Istvan Vas, Ottlik, Miklos Hubay, and many others whose merits are exclusively literary, the reader may well risk the contagion.

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the notorious "milkman's call," and you would be spirited away for your alleged crime without trial or warning. Now, you are rung up by a polite but unknown voice in the late morning and asked to come to some recognised meeting place; the Belvarasi Café is a favourite resort. Here you are greeted by a well-spoken official in civilian clothes who offers you coffee and a cigarette. After some desultory conversation, he takes from his pocket a letter which you recognise as the one you wrote some days ago to a relation living in the West.

"In this letter," he says, "you wrote most critically and unfairly of the socialist society we are trying to build. You are giving the West an untruthful and biased picture of conditions. I must warn you that if you write this sort of thing again, there will be trouble!"

No one will deny that this method is an improvement on the one employed by Mr. Peter Gabor and his colleagues who ran the A.V.O. in Rakosi's time. It is an improvement which benefits everybody both ways, for without using torture, the security forces achieve their aim more effectively. The prisons are still there, for those who write another letter on the same lines. And they are still being used.

The whole A.V.O. organisation has been overhauled; it is no longer staffed by embittered men longing for personal or class revenge, by milkmen suddenly turned into full Colonels, or fitters dressed up in Major's uniforms. If these people still occupy such posts, they have since been given some kind of education and training—as the Belvarasi Café episode proves.

An attempt at reorganising the whole bureaucratic machine on these lines is now in progress. In Rakosi's days, the desire to emphasise "proletarian solidarity" was such that ambassadors and diplomats accredited to Western capitals were deliberately chosen from among men of the humblest origins. In Brussels in Rakosi's time, the Hungarian ambassador, an old Bolshevik, was so ignorant that, on being congratulated several times at a diplomatic reception on the excellence of the famous Hungarian Tatraj string quartet which was touring Western Europe, he answered in his embarrassment, "Yes, yes, we are so pleased with our little orchestra that we are increasing its size."

The A.V.O. methods are extended not only to the general populace but to the Gabor Peters themselves, the old Stalinist leaders now in disgrace, who tortured their prisoners mercilessly. Men like Gabor Peter or the Farkas's now have to report to the police once a week; otherwise they are not molested, and most of them are living modestly in Budapest. Rakosi himself has not been allowed to return (he is in Russia). Ernö Gerö is said to have been seen quite recently scurrying along the Vaci utca. Revai (a fervent member of the Tancsic's group to the end) died two years ago, to Kadar's relief as much as to everyone else's; but his trusty lieutenant, the Muscovite, Elizabeth Andics, is still alive. She is working in the department of historical research and has just produced an historical study. Her husband, Andor Berei, another old Muscovite, who was deputy foreign minister and head of planning under Rakosi, works in the office of the Hungarian Encyclopædia.

The strangest lot of all is that of the hated head of the secret police, Peter Gabor. He works in a municipal library in the suburbs. When he arrived there after being released from prison in 1960,[9] he changed his name, and the people did not at first recognise this nondescript little ex-tailor (interesting, that these 20th-century demons, the Gabors, Himmlers, and Berias are all nondescript looking little men). Because he was silent, grim, and straitlaced, a number of girls who worked in the library decided to make fun of him. One day, they pulled away the chair he was about to sit on, and he took a heavy fall. The director of the library now felt that things were going too far, so he called the girls into his office, and told them that the man whose leg they were always pulling was none other than Peter Gabor. Two of the women (so my informant told me) fainted on the spot.

Mindszenty

I ALSO ENQUIRED into the fate of another, very different figure, dating from the 1956 days, Cardinal Mindszenty. He is still in the American Legation, where his health has improved considerably in the last two years. As he is only seventy and in full possession of all his faculties, he will presumably still be there for many years; for no one knows what to do with him. Outside the American Legation, two government vehicles still wait day and night for this redoubtable opponent of the régime to set foot on the pavement. A year ago, he wanted to attend a Consistory in Rome, and his hosts wrote asking the government if he might have a free pass through the country, to Rome and back. The Hungarian government replied politely, but ironically, that they had no idea that the Americans were harbouring a wanted criminal, who had escaped from prison in 1956, and whose sentence still had some years to run! They regretted they could not give him a free pass.

Mindszenty's following in the country is no longer as great as it was. Among the intellectuals, even those who are resolutely anti-Kadar, it is almost nil, and they contrast his heavy-handed methods with those of the skilful Wyszynski in Poland. It is among the peasantry that the memory of this courageous man is still alive.

As in all Communist countries, agriculture is still the weakest part of the economy. (How should it not be so, when it is still to-day in Russia, a country that has had forty years of this system, in a worse state than it was in the time of the Czars?) In industry the Hungarian régime may finally make a respectable showing, for many more consumer goods are now appearing in the shops; but in agriculture, and particularly in the raising of cattle, the Communists have run into appalling difficulties as the result of their decision to abolish all smallholdings, and turn the entire country over to co-operative farming. The peasants, without the

[9] Most of these people were released about the same time as Dery and his group, their "opposite numbers."

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incentive of self-interest, do the minimum of work and then sit about doing nothing. The co-operative cattle wander about untended.[10]

The clearest proof of this is revealed in a short story by a young Communist poet, Sandor Csoori, "Village in the Wind," which has just been published in *Kortars* magazine (1961). He writes of a newly-formed co-operative farm in the Puszta which he visits, to find that it is dissolving, in spite of the efforts of the Party agitators. The peasants have come to blows with the agitators and, worst of all, so indifferent are they to the idea of the co-operative that they turn their communally owned animals out into the fields and woods and let them fend for themselves. The animals die or deteriorate, and soon the whole farm is in complete disintegration.

That this story has been published may be regarded as a good sign; the régime is at least prepared to listen to criticism. But Csoori, who appears to be a sincere Communist, is said to have been called up before the authorities and informed that he had gone too far. Such unbridled criticism must not be repeated. Only "constructive criticism" is wanted. Such are the difficulties a dictatorial régime is always running into when it tries to be "liberal."

Transylvania

THE LAST POINT to make about Hungary to-day is connected, significantly, less with Communism than with nationalism, which is the strongest psychological force in the land. Try as the Communists may, they can work up very little enthusiasm among the people for or against the various -isms which they are always talking about, Capitalism, Fascism, Realism, Schematism, Sectarianism, Dogmatism, etc. But mention the word "Transylvania" to a Hungarian, and he will get as excited as an I.R.A. man talking about the Six Counties. Even the ironical Gyula Illyés, who would take nothing I said seriously, got heated over Transylvania. *"C'est une injustice! C'est une injustice!"* I can still see his eyes blazing as he repeated these words.

Transylvania, which contains two-and-a-half million Hungarians—a huge proportion out of the present Hungarian population of ten million—was handed over to Rumania by the Treaty of Trianon in 1919, and this award was confirmed again in 1945. Such is the violent feeling caused by this transfer, that these two neighbouring countries—supposed to be closer still as members of the great "socialist fraternity"—are about as far from one another as Hungary and England, even geographically one might say, because it is easier to-day for a Hungarian to go to England than to Rumania. The Rumanians are so frightened of Hungarian "revanchist" activities in Transylvania that they will not allow any Hungarian private citizen into their country, except on the most extreme compassionate grounds, and then only once a year. I heard dozens of hardship stories in which Hungarians could not visit sick and aged parents in Transylvania. It is impossible even to send a parcel from Hungary to Rumania. An English visitor I met was amazed when she was advised that a small present she had bought in Budapest for some Rumanian friends would have to wait for despatch until she returned to England.

The Hungarians claim that the Rumanians, having closed the Hungarian-speaking university in Cluj last year, now intend to eradicate the Hungarian language from these traditionally Hungarian lands. Many Hungarian writers and artists come from Transylvania where, it is claimed, the purest Hungarian is spoken; and some of them, the novelist Aron Tamasi and the old sculptor Borsos, with whom I spoke, became emotional when they referred to their native land. After fifteen years of the "fraternal international society," of socialism, in Eastern Europe, such are the relations between these two Danubian states—as bad as they were in 1939.

TO SUM UP. The old half-feudal system before 1939 in Hungary was pretty rotten, but it was not an iron system. The peasants living under their careless, and often absentee, landlords could get away with a great deal. Dishonest this may have been, but at least it was a safety valve which worked in its own empirical way. Now the system is iron-clad, fairer on paper, unfairer in practice. It still does not allow for the human quality of adapting oneself to given circumstances. Still to-day, five years after the revolution, the Party operates in an arbitrary way behind people's backs, making and breaking careers, without giving the victim a chance to defend himself. This is clear from the article by Andreas Nagy in the February 1961 number of *Partelet*. Writing about conditions in a factory in Budafok he says, under the heading *"Not Behind Their Backs,"*

> There are still cases in which a person is transferred or dismissed as a result of gossip, and there is nothing he can do about it *because the real cause is not mentioned* [his italics]. Groups like floating seaweed coil around a man and drown him.

In the basic behaviour of the Party towards the nation, then, little has changed in the past five years. But that such an article as this one in *Partelet*—and many others which I have quoted from the literary papers—can be printed to-day, must be counted an improvement in the lot of the unfortunate Hungarians. They have little hope in the West, and they only ask that international tension may not increase, and that these limited concessions may continue.

Anthony Rhodes

[10] Everyone told me that the peasants had the best time of their lives in 1957 and 1958—when, after the revolution, the co-operatives were broken up. But in the last year they have been imposed again.

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LETTERS

George Orwell

If John Wain feels moved to write an essay on Orwell, let him do so; but it is unfair of him to use Richard Rees' book as a coat-hanger for it. The book—*Fugitive from the Camp of Victory*—seems to me the best work on Orwell published to date; I may be wrong, but it certainly deserves serious and detailed critical consideration. John Wain dismisses it in a single opening sentence as "chatty, rather lightweight," then goes on for twenty-odd columns venting his own heavyweight opinions on Orwell, without mentioning the book again. Thus Rees' book is deprived of a review, while your readers are informed that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is "obviously nothing more than a hasty draft rushed out... by a dying man" (the charm of the sentence lies in the "nothing more"). This is one of Mr. Wain's two references to Orwell's masterpiece that created the concepts of doublethink, Newspeak, Big Brother—terms which have become international currency all over the civilised world. In the second reference to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is called "a weapon" that, believe it or not, Orwell "put into the hands of the British Conservative Party which he must have known they would use." The whole thing leaves an aftertaste like Orwell's unforgettably nasty sausage with a rubbery skin and oozy content "calling itself a Frankfurter and filled with fish."

Arthur Koestler

London

Your reviewer John Wain is bad-tempered on the subject of the collected edition of George Orwell's essays and a word of explanation to him and your readers will perhaps be in order.

When the two posthumous volumes of Orwell's essays were being prepared for publication the author's widow and literary executrix together with the publishers, ourselves, carefully considered which of his journalism should be included. Some pieces, such as book reviews, were omitted as being minor works, others because they largely repeated what he had said better elsewhere, others because they had dated in a way which made them of little lasting importance, yet others were left out because Orwell himself did not consider them worthy of preservation.

The *Collected Essays* was explicitly intended to be a collection, with certain stated exceptions, of the essays which had already appeared in the three published volumes. It was not thrown together in the office by someone with half an hour to spare, and if the proofs have indeed been badly read, as Mr. Wain suggests, we should be glad to receive a list of misprints and textual corruptions so that the second printing may be as perfect as possible. Having said this, we have to admit that we made a blunder by omitting Orwell's magnificent essay on Kipling. It would take too long to describe how this came to be, but we accept responsibility for it, regret it, apologise to Mr. Wain and others, and assure them that it will be included in a second printing. This will be necessary in the immediate future since the first edition of the *Collected Essays* which was well reviewed elsewhere has sold more rapidly than we had expected and we do not regard it in any way as a hasty compilation put together by the office boy; indeed we have no office boy.

Frederic J. Warburg

London

Barzun's "Romanticism"

It is a little surprising to see Encounter lending itself (September) as forum for Mr. Barzun's latest breezy generalisations about the decline and fall of practically everything—not without his peculiar capacity for ambiguous conclusions, which makes it possible for him to condemn our age, and have it, too. But his analysis of "the total repudiation of Art by our leading men" and of the "frittering away of high art through vulgarisation" seems this time extraordinarily superficial.

His "Abolitionists" are the action painters, the atonalists in music, and the "beat" poets; their "art" is "mindless," "purposeless," and "formless." Of the action painters, perhaps one can only hope that they are less universal than Mr. Barzun implies; atonal music may not "embody or evoke the strongest emotions," but it is certainly far from "formless," and surely no music has ever been more intellectual. And, whatever one may say of the "beats" in literature, by what stretch of even a Barzun hyperbole can they be called "our leading men"?

As for the "vulgarisation" of high art: surely it is not being too unkind or too personal to point out that Mr. Barzun himself is a director of a highly popular American book club (albeit more highbrow than most)? Not that I object to Mr. Barzun's club—I have myself taken advantage of some of the bargains available by means of what he calls this "high pressure distribution"—but it seems a bit unkind of Mr. Barzun to so bite the hand that feeds him. He does, however, make more concession than some of his fellow Jeremiahs to these advantages of the 20th century: "We are grateful for the comprehensive repertoire which modern industry for the first time puts within our reach, but," he concludes, "we turn sick at the aggressive temptation, like the novice in the sweet-shop." But, we might conclude, surely it would be better that the "novice" learn some measure of self-control, than that we abolish "sweetshops"?

Peter L. Thorslev, Jr.

Los Angeles, California

Professor Barzun, in "Romanticism To-day," blasts away at contemporary culture with some dead ammunition. Among the examples of "frittering away of high art through vulgarisation" he cites "classical drama on television any day of the

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Life & Letters To-day

DEFENDING *a husband accused of murdering a man he suspected of going out with his wife, Mr. Edward Clarke, Q.C., said at Sussex Assizes, at Lewes yesterday: "Picture the situation of this man, aged 50, who finds his wife has begun to wear high-heeled shoes and to read 'Lady Chatterley's Lover.' It is no joke."*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

A MOTHER *whose three children were seen standing in tears on the doorstep on Christmas night because the door was locked and she was out was fined £10 for neglect at Ealing, London, yesterday. She was Mrs. Marie Luigi, 31, a widow, of North Avenue, Southall.*

Mr. R. C. Politeyan, prosecuting said: "It is just like a page out of Dickens, with the children going off to school not properly clothed or fed and revoltingly dirty."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

DEFENDING *a husband accused of murdering a man whom he suspected of going out with his wife, Mr. Clarke, Q.C., told the jury: "If you know the story of Othello you will know that he was worked on by Iago, the villain of the piece, who so put things into Othello's head concerning his wife that he lost control and eventually put his fingers round Desdemona's throat."*

THE TIMES

A MAJOR *political storm is expected over the grave weaknesses revealed in Britain's security services by the Old Bailey spy case.... Commander Stuart Erskine Crewe-Read, 60-year-old retired destroyer commander and security officer at Portland, admitted that he had not passed on information about Houghton to the Chief of Naval Intelligence in London. Why? Because "it all sounded like a novel." ...*

DAILY MAIL

A MIDDLE-AGED SOLICITOR *gave a job to a beautiful, uneducated, 16-year-old girl and moulded her to his ideal, a court was told yesterday. He taught her to speak well and interested her in good books. "It was the Pygmalion story all over again," said Mr. T. K. Edie, defending the girl at the Old Bailey.*

But Mr. Edie added: "In addition to teaching the girl things that were highly commendable he imparted his views on morals and atheism. He told her there was no God and that the Bible was a fairy story...."

Asked about the reference to Pygmalion and whether he considered he had in any way been a Professor Higgins, with Miss Smith as Eliza Doolittle, the solicitor said firmly: "No comment."

DAILY MAIL

MOSCOW RADIO *yesterday spoke about a "spy mania" being developed by the British press—but it did not mention the recent convictions of George Blake, Gordon Lonsdale, and others. The radio, quoting a report from Mr. Trofimerko, a Russian correspondent in London, said: "The British press has recently been strongly developing a spy-mania campaign. Following the standard recipe of American detective stories, they have brought into their adventures mythical Russian agents...."*

THE GUARDIAN

PRESIDENT KENNEDY *is reported to enjoy, in his lighter moments, the improbable adventures of Mr. James Bond, the creation of Mr. Ian Fleming, whose capacity for bearing physical torture is no less than his intimate knowledge of the Soviet underground or his attraction for handsome women. Mr. Bond has emerged as part of the Administration's answer to Communist political warfare.*

THE TIMES

A SUBURBAN HOUSEWIFE *in Texas says a book containing the writings of Plato her son found in a school library may be "one of the reasons we have so many sex maniacs walking around." Mrs. Fay Searle, 35, said she will go before the Channelview School Board to protest against* Living Biographies of Great Philosophers *being in the Junior High School Library. The book is a study of the lives and thoughts of 21 philosophers from Plato to Santayana. Mrs. Seale said she objected to an account of Plato's proposals for communal mating, free love, and mixed gymnastics for boys and girls clad only in their virtue.*

N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

THERE HAVE BEEN *allegations that improper disqualification of anti-Communist E.T.U. branches, fraudulent use of extra ballot papers as postal votes, and misrepresentations of voting returns secured the election of Mr. Haxell, a Communist, and the defeat of his opponent, anti-Communist, John Byrne, of Clydebank. The defendants have denied conspiracy or fraud, but concede that irregularities disclosed in the investigation would invalidate the election.... Piled round the judge were seven big filing boxes of documents, and a stack of grey-bound foolscap volumes containing the typescript of the evidence and speeches equal to about 18 novels.*

DAILY EXPRESS

A STUDENT NURSE *who longed to leave a job he disliked planned an armed raid on a Newcastle bank, it was stated at an inquest to-day. His "textbooks," said Detective-Inspector Burrows, were two firearms catalogues and a well-thumbed copy of the complete works of Shakespeare.*

In a letter to his wife, found in his pocket when the attempt failed, he said: "As soldiers of the battlefield write letters for their comrades to post, so do I. I want you to think of this as a battle...." Then, said the inspector, there was a quotation:

"Be thou my witness that against my will
As Pompey was, am I compelled to set
Upon one battle all our liberties."

THE TIMES

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week" and "highbrow paperbacks in mountainous profusion."

Even in New York, where television is well above the U.S. average, I challenge Professor Barzun to find classical drama "any day of the week." And even if he could, would this be worse than the insipid diet of Westerns, cute family comedies, and other rubbish that floods the airways. After all, we can't all aspire to the fine sensibility of Professor Barzun. Is half a loaf for the proles worse than none?

And what on earth is wrong with paperbacks? Do hard bindings, high prices, and relative scarcity make books like *The Brothers Karamazov* better before they are available in paperback? Or does Professor Barzun merely think the proles should be sheltered from the temptation to read good literature?

I suggest that Professor Barzun's snobbish theory about the vulgarisation of culture contains more nonsense than truth. There is quite enough bad in modern life without exaggerating it.

C. W. Griffin

Denville,
New Jersey

I am content to let Mr. Griffin and Mr. Thorsley impute motives and characterise my presumed attitudes. I only wish that they had mastered their dissatisfaction sufficiently to consider the aspects they chose from the situation I described. They might then have offered us explanations more cogent than mine.

If many artists to-day are revolted by the spread of "culture" under forced draft, what reason, not self-regarding, can we assign? If the liveliest part of the vanguard repudiates high art and its moral and æsthetic contents, while older established groups reach the same result through arid systems, what does this tell us about the present age? *Of course* my treatment of these questions was superficial—an essay, as the name implies, is an attempt at understanding, not a demonstration.

My guesses, however, came from a good deal of reflection on the subject and its history, whereas your correspondents seem chiefly concerned about me. And even on that profitless topic, they unwittingly mislead. Thus it is objected that I "condemn the age and have it too." I do not condemn, but I try to sort out and occasionally criticise. How could I do either if I did not "have," *i.e.*, take a sympathetic part in, what I give my mind to? I conclude that your correspondents and I can hardly quarrel to much purpose: we are not interested in the same things.

Jacques Barzun

Columbia University,
New York City

Chekov's "Platonov"

The publication by Methuen of Mr. Dmitri Makaroff's almost unabbreviated version of Chekhov's *Platonov* is as good a moment as any to draw your readers' belated attention to some misleading remarks in Mr. Nigel Dennis's review of this play after its production at the Royal Court Theatre last year as well as to air some observations of my own.

Sons Without Fathers is not an alternative title for *Platonov*. Michael Chekhov refers to two distinct plays written by his brother: one, a serious drama, called *Fatherless*, which he had written while still a schoolboy, and, later, the play, which, from his description of it, is identifiable as *Platonov*. This play, written probably in 1880, was copied by his brother for submission to the censorship and is the one turned down for production by Yermolova. It was first published in Russia in 1923 and again in 1949, when it was printed as *A Play Without a Title*, the title-page having been lost. Michael recalls 43 years later that it had a large cast and resembled a French melodrama. The two should not be confused.

Mr. Dennis has his figures wrong. If he thinks that by adding patronymics the apparent size of the cast is doubled (a doubtful joke, if I may say so), he is in any case in error, as five of the 20 characters are listed without them. As it happens Mr. Dmitri Makaroff's English version augments the number to 21 by giving the nameless maid-servant the name of Dunyasha and reduces the total possible number by reducing the "Guests" of the original to "A Village Priest." But Mr. Dennis omits any reference to Mr. Makaroff's most singular omission: the suppression of the 21st character, Isaac Vengerovich, son of the Vengerovich whom the Royal Court Theatre programme describes as an unscrupulous and astute Jewish business man and whom Mr. Dennis rightly equates with Shylock.

Mr. Makaroff, and Messrs. George Devine and John Blatchley, if indeed they are the guilty ones, as Mr. Dennis prefers to believe, have repeated the misrepresentation perpetrated by M. Pol Quentin, author of the version called *Ce Fou de Platonov* which was staged by the Théâtre National Populaire in Bordeaux and Paris in 1956. As I pointed out at the time, M. Quentin and M. Vilar had fused the two separate characters of the Jewish money-lender and his radical son and in their place created the un-Chekhovian character of a kind of visionary Shylock with the conscience of a poet. There can be no doubt that the young Jewish revolutionary is an integral and essential, even though a secondary, element in the play. He foretells in the words of one or another of the dramatist's Jewish student friends, the doom that was to overtake the idle middle classes of provincial Russia. He is the prototype of Trofimov and, like many another character with him, identifiable in the later plays. He has nothing in common with the rapacious Vengerovich presented either in France, or, now, in London. Isaac has not only been dropped from the English version. He has, though to a lesser extent than in the French version, been merged into the negative figure of his own father. (One might be tempted to call the present version *Fathers without Sons*.) There is nobody now to call Platonov "a highly original blackguard" or to reject his proffered hand of hypocritical friendship. To leave out the young Jew is, in my submission, a cardinal error that traduces a

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great and important part of "what the author meant." If he is seen to be, as surely he must be, a prototype of Trofimov, Astrov, or Tusenbach, the play loses the one and only character who acts as the author's mouthpiece. The transference of some of his lines to his father and the omission of the critical "How many unhappy, hungry, drunken people there are under the moon? When will the millions who sow but do not eat ever stop going hungry?", with which he justifies his churlish rejection of Platonov's sneering handshake, do unpardonable violence to one of the mainsprings of Chekhov's creative humanism.

If it was indeed Mr. Devine's decision to leave this character out, I am sorry that he did not show that "greater courage to leave many things in that others might have taken out" for which Mr. Dennis so uncritically admires him.

OSSIA TRILLING

Theatre News,
London

[P.S.—I wrote the above before reading the full published version. That I was right in my analysis of the role of the young Vengerovich is, I believe, supported by the closing sentences in Mr. Devine's introduction which imply that he may have had second thoughts when it was too late to turn back.]

MR. TRILLING'S corrections are most welcome: it is not easy to find an authority on *Platonov* because there is so much contradiction of pundits in the matter. But what fascinates me about this play is that in the form in which we saw it at the Royal Court it is one of the best and most endearing comedies ever written. Mr. Trilling would prefer it to be a chilling tragedy, or at least a sombre exposure of decadence, and I am sure he is right in believing that Chekhov intended it to be. But Chekhov did *not* intend to leave behind him the incredibly verbose and muddled rough text which is all that remains of *Platonov*—and all that remains for a producer to work on. I would not have believed it was possible to coax even a half-decent play out of the original mess, let alone an admirable comedy which still retains the author's peculiar view of Russian life. I would welcome a production that was more in harmony with Mr. Trilling's dreams, because I should like to see if it could bear the weight he imposes on it and still be as good as the lighter version we have seen at the Court.

NIGEL DENNIS

Haffner

FOR MY PART, my thinking is much enriched by Sebastian Haffner's article. I am most grateful to you for printing it.

I want everybody at the F.O. to see it—the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary, the Permanent Under-Secretary, the Private Secretary—everybody you can think of....

ROLAND BERRILL

Eastbourne

Wain's India

THERE was no need for Mr. Wain even to reply to his Indian critics in the September number of ENCOUNTER.

Mr. Wain's article made absolutely first-class, factual, and interesting reading. No right-thinking Indian expected Mr. Wain to walk with his eyes shut, his ears padded with wool, and his lips sealed—specially as Mr. Wain was sure to come across a surprise, every two steps he took. He has every right to form his own judgment, and report it as he jolly well likes to do so.

May I remind his Indian critics of the Indian proverb, "The outsider has often the best view."

BEJAN J. DARUWALLA

Ahmedabad,
India

AUTHORS

François Bondy is the editor of *Preuves* in Paris.... **Andrew Boyd** is an assistant editor of *The Economist*. He contributed a "Moscow Notebook" to our June 1959 number.... **David Daiches** recently published his two-volume *Critical History of English Literature* (Secker & Warburg).... **Frances Hope** is a young critic living in London.... **Constantine FitzGibbon's** most recent book was the much-discussed *When the Kissing Had to Stop*, and it has been translated into several languages (but under slightly different titles, for apparently the Browning phrase confused translators).... **Clancy Sigal** is a young American writer living in England. His first book was a study of miners called *Weekend in Dinlock* (Secker & Warburg). The pieces in this number of ENCOUNTER will be included in his new book, *Going Away*, Houghton Mifflin, U.S., to be published shortly.

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